THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(1650-1926)

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THE INDEPENDENT CHURCH

OF

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(1650–1826)

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WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

[*Frontispiece.*

THE

INDEPENDENT CHURCH

OF

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

(1650–1826)

BY

REV. IRA BOSELEY

LATE ACTING CHAPLAIN TO H.M. FORCES

AUTHOR OF "THE LIVING LOOM: OR, LIGHT ON FACTORY LIFE" "CHRIST THE CARPENTER, AND HIS TRADE IN HIS TEACHINGS"; "AN ANGEL STANDING IN THE SUN: A BOOK FOR THE BEREAVED," ETC.

LONDON

The Congregational Union of England and Wales

MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGDON STREET

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IN

MEMORY OF MY WIFE,

WHO

DEPARTED THIS LIFE

IN THE MIDST OF

UNTIRING CHRISTIAN SERVICE,

IN

ACCORDANCE WITH HER DESIRE.

"A Succourer of Many."

PREFACE

AN Independent Church *in* the National Abbey! Surprise, amounting to incredulity, has been expressed at the mention of such a Church. And yet a most influential one existed within its walls for ten years, and continued for 165 years.

The following chapters contain accounts of Independent Churches in other abbeys, as well as cathedrals, in order to show that this Church at Westminster did not stand alone. They also set forth some stirring incidents of the period, that the characters of its noble ministers, and heroic members, might the more clearly be brought into relief.

The story of this Church after leaving the Abbey is also of thrilling interest. It shows the spirit fostered by its members while worshipping there, and the principles then

inculcated, which they strove so bravely to exemplify. Its earlier life shone out in its later career, and the invincible courage they cherished from the first rose into culminating expression towards its close.

The setting amid which this renowned Church is presented will serve to explain some crises and events in the nation and shed light upon present-day controversies. It will illustrate the cleavage existing between an Imperial ecclesiasticism and that religious liberty for which the Independents of the Commonwealth contended, and their successors maintained at such terrible costs to themselves.

The Author is indebted to the venerable Rev. James Knaggs for much valuable assistance. Principal Vaughan Pryce has given him the freest access to the treasures of New College Museum Library. The Rev. T. G. Crippen, Librarian at the Memorial Hall, has readily assisted him. Much important information has been culled from the Guildhall, Dr. Williams's and other public libraries, as well as from the archives at Somerset House.

This work is in part a mosaic, because the Author was anxious that reliable history should speak, rather than himself. Several writers quoted are named; but while many extracts are indicated, there are others too numerous to mention.

This book is the outcome of extensive research into the events of the period surrounding this Independent Church of the Abbey. It is an attempt to present intact a neglected section of Religious History which deserves the greatest prominence. If it should increase the reader's reverence for our Nonconformist forefathers, and stimulate that Puritan spirit which makes for righteousness, the Author will feel amply rewarded for his labour.

82, Antrim Mansions,
Haverstock Hill, N.W.
March, 1907.

ILLUSTRATIONS

WESTMINSTER ABBEY . . . . *Frontispiece*

HOGARTH'S BAPTISMAL REGISTER . *To face page* 157

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I

PURITANS AND PARISH CHURCHES

IT has often been shown that the credentials of Independency are conspicuous in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles, and the Apocalypse. The taunt that it is schismatical is opposed to the whole teaching of Scripture. As it was originated, and is sustained, by the Holy Spirit it must tend to moral purity. It frees the soul's capacities for its own expression, and while expanding its powers it also ennobles them. Hence, true Independents must become true Christians.

Such Puritanism enabled multitudes in the post-apostolic Churches to emerge from their carnal selves, and through sinlessness to advance towards holiness. The more it possessed them the greater was their impatience with the corruptions of heathenism

and the formalities of Judaism. It asserted itself amid each of the ten great persecutions in the early centuries. Nothing could repress their enthusiasm as martyrs or quench their devotion to their Lord.

The *name* "Puritan" was derived from the Cathari, a sect which applied it to themselves, and contended that they only composed the Church. Their followers spread throughout many lands, and their influence was like streams whose springs are high up in the everlasting hills, which in their downflow combine in one mighty torrent. That torrent was here and there hidden as if lost in gorge after gorge to human gaze, but at length broke forth in tumultuous triumph among the landscapes for renewing the strength of communities from generation to generation.

These Puritans were not content to accept doctrines because these were generally received. They showed themselves hostile to many existing systems, and contended for freedom in the pursuit of truth. Neander traces them down to the thirteenth century, and speaks of Johannes de Lugio as an original teacher and author among them.

Though their name has been used as one of reproach, their power was greater than is generally recognised. They influenced the various religious orders which objected to images, paintings, and ornate services during the Middle Ages, because these appealed to the sensuous rather than the spiritual in worshippers, and diverted attention from things invisible and Divine.

Their principles had often been enunciated by many of the earliest Fathers, as well as the martyrs. Most reformers proclaimed them, and their work was but a logical attempt to realise scriptural ideals. The ablest ecclesiastical historians, and some of the greatest scholars, now acknowledge that these principles came down from apostolic days.

This Puritan Independency rose into power amid the various changes of which Wycliffe and Luther were the promoters. It seemed hidden in this country during the cruelties of Queen Mary's reign, but neither fire nor force could subdue it. It survived the tyrannies of Archbishop Laud, and was so active at the Commonwealth as to bring about most beneficent reforms. Its spirit

and principles were seen in simplicity of worship and conduct. Its faults were merely "the faults of exaggeration in speech and deportment, with an undue depreciation of the world." And its present aims explain the separate currents which exist in the life of the nation and the contentions that are maintained between the advocates of spiritual freedom and ecclesiastical authority.

Several contributory causes of these currents were combined in the early Puritanism. The newly translated Bible was circulated, and its teaching led to more enlightened views of the Church and Christian worship. Then came the partial Reformation under Cranmer; and as this took the form of compromise it was felt that much Romanism had been retained which could not be tolerated, but must be driven out from the Church. Many, too, developed Presbyterianism with Puritanism, which, like Independency, could trace its chief characteristics to the Bible. In the one, however, the spirit was somewhat fettered by creed and constitution, while in the other there was freedom for its manifestation and service.

The question of Presbyterial government for the English Church had been raised as early as the year 1570. It centred around the name of Thomas Cartwright, Professor at Trinity College, Cambridge. He assailed the Establishment, and contended that Presbyterianism was the New Testament order. "He denounced the whole hierarchical system, and insisted on the right of the people to choose their own Ministers." He also identified himself with the Puritans, hence Presbyterianism and Puritanism became combined in their claims through him. His appeal was to the Scriptures concerning doctrine and discipline; and he sought to put down both Prelate and Priest. Such were some of the forces working *from within* the Church.

There were also influences *from without* which contributed to Puritanism. During Queen Mary's persecutions multitudes had fled to the Continent. Some eight hundred refugees lived in Zurich, Basle, Strassburg, Frankfort, Geneva, and other cities. Geneva was their great rallying centre, whose Magistrates treated them most considerately. The Freedom of the City was conferred upon

some of their number. John Calvin was then at the height of his brilliant career, whose Cathedral—"St. Pierre"—is a great attraction to devout and scholarly travellers. The exiles, who were the choicest spirits, incited each other to holy living, and thus became equipped for the noblest service among their own countrymen. Having joined in the simple Religious Observances of "The Reformed Churches" in various parts of the Continent, they came back to their beloved "Mother Church" with an eager desire to purge her from superstition and corruption; and to worship in such ways as would purify the lives of the people, and ennoble the entire nation.

These were some of the conditions which concurrent events had created, and through them the Spirit was continuously expressing Himself. His influence in the souls, and upon the lives of these men, made them into Puritans. They gained the nature *before* they received the name. Thus from within and without forces were evolved which abolished Prelacy on the one hand, and established Presbyterianism on the other. Fuller, viewing Puritans as seen in their Worship, says: the

name was applied "to all those who endeavoured in their devotions to accompany the Minister with a pure heart, and who were remarkably holy in their lives." Their aim was to perfect the Reformation.

But though this partial Establishment of Presbyterians was an act of expediency it proved to be a mistake. They became Royalist in tendency, and imperious in action. It was soon made evident that they could be as tyrannical as Prelates, especially where possessing "coercive jurisdiction" as in Lancashire, and in London. Dean Stanley spoke of Rev. Stephen Marshall, B.D., as "Primate of the Presbyterian Church." He also said that "the Confession of Faith" was the established Formulary of this Church which issued from the Jerusalem Chamber. And the attempt to force "the Solemn League and Covenant" of 1643 alike upon Clergy and Laity was a greater outrage of Religious Liberty than seeking to impose the whole Prayer Book upon the nation. Hence, Milton wrote that "New Presbyter was old Priest writ large."

Now while Presbyterianism endeavoured to manage Church affairs by chosen representa-

tives Independency sought to express itself through the people. Its aim was to create a new conscience for the regulation of conduct, and to incite men to live according to principles which alone could clothe the nation with righteousness. It strove to evolve such a Church as would be a fitting medium for the Self-manifestation of Christ. They hoped that some way might be found for insuring peace and harmony among all parties. At the same time they resisted the imposition of creeds and ceremonies. Even arrangements for the observance of the Lord's Supper and Baptism were left to the Churches and their Ministers. The early Independents were not Separatists but conformable Churchmen. As a result they increased in numbers and influence, until they gained command in the Army and Navy; in the Church and the State; and made their own Country feared and respected among the Nations.

But the stand taken meant far more than assailing corruption and ceremonialism, and resisting Regal and Ecclesiastical tyranny. There was something very positive in their attitude; for they sought to secure the liberties

of the people, and to preach a pure and undefiled Religion among them. The secret of their power was traceable to their own spiritual life, and in their clear perception, and resolute grasp, of revealed truth. As they studied the New Testament they became increasingly convinced that the early centuries knew nothing of Bishops as Rulers ; or, of Clergy as "Successors of the Apostles." They were sure that the true Church consisted only of avowed Christians with Christ alone as Ruler among them. Their aim was to make England a Kingdom of God !

In the arrangements carried out for Worship in Parish Churches they evidently agreed to differ. They often showed a greater desire for mutual accommodation than to accentuate differences. Among other similar cases this was conspicuous in the Church of St. Nicholas, Great Yarmouth, which is a most extensive structure. On January 23, 1649, a proposal was made to prepare the North Aisle as a separate place of Worship. Six days afterwards a Committee reported to the Assembly "that they did not conceive it to be so convenient as the Chancel for public exercises of

worship." It was then ordered "that the Chancel should be closed in with main walls where needful, and fitted up for a Church House." This was occupied by the Presbyterians under the Pastoral care of Rev. John Brinsley, M.A., of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

The great North Aisle was afterwards enclosed and used for worship, by the Independents, and Rev. William Bridge, M.A., of the same College, became their Minister. He had been driven by persecution to Holland, and was called to the Oversight of a Church in Rotterdam; but returned to England in 1642, and often preached before the Long Parliament. Though a strict Congregationalist, he used all his influence to keep Mr. Brinsley, the Presbyterian, in his position when the Independents came into power. Miles Corbet, one of the Judges at the Trial of Charles I., belonged to his Church, and is spoken of as "a great promoter of the Dissenting Meetings." The Vestry was used by Mr. Bridge, and the table still there is that around which the members received the bread and wine from his hands at the Supper of their Lord.

On November 19, 1661, "the Keys of the Meeting-house were sent for by the Bayliffs, and delivered to the Dean and Sir Thomas Meadows; and the Vestry door was nailed up." Thus closed the first chapter of Congregational History in Great Yarmouth. The Episcopalians had worshipped in a third section of the building, but the whole of it was thrown open to them soon after the Restoration.

The noble Parish Church of the Holy Trinity at Hull was divided between the Presbyterians and Independents. The Minister of the latter Body, the Rev. John Shave, M.A., was recognised as a Puritan while at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1630. In 1636 he received the appointment as Lecturer at "All Hallows," in York. The lectures were generally delivered on market days, or, on Sunday afternoons, so as not to interfere with the usual services. He also became Chaplain to the Earl of Pembroke, and accompanied his Lordship when attending the King to Berwick. But he had little rest on account of wars and persecutions. At length, in response to an invitation from Hull, he

officiated in the low Church, and also in the high Church, of that Town. He then became Chaplain to the Forces at the Castle; and during the Protectorate he sometimes preached before Oliver Cromwell at Whitehall and Hampton Court.

At the Restoration he accepted a Chaplaincy to the King. But a complaint was soon made of his being no friend to Episcopacy and the Prayer Book, when he was inhibited by Bishop Weldon, on June 1, 1661. On leaving Holy Trinity he returned to Rotherham on June 20 following, where he died on April 19, 1672, and was buried in the Parish Church.

In delightful contrast to such dividing of Churches during the Commonwealth stands the case of Coggeshall in Essex. St. Peter's in that town is a most spacious building, in the Perpendicular style of architecture. The Prince of Puritans, Dr. John Owen, being invited by the Parishioners to succeed the Rev. Obadiah Sedgwick, B.D., the Earl of Warwick, as Patron, gave him the living, and he was inducted on August 18, 1646. He also became Vice-Chancellor of the University

of Oxford, and confidential adviser of Oliver Cromwell. He was then created a Doctor of Divinity, and his diploma is dated December 22, 1653. A writ having been issued for the election of a Burgess to represent the University in Parliament, he was chosen on June 27, 1654. But as "The Committee of Priveleges" questioned his right to be a Member on account of his being in the Ministry, he occupied his seat in the House of Commons only a short time.

The Rev. Bryan Dale, M.A., in his "Annals of Coggeshall" says: "Dr. Owen having considered, and more thoroughly adopted, the principles of Independency than he had before, he never swerved from them in honour, or dishonour, to the end of his life. On his coming to Coggeshall he formed a Church according to the Congregational order, which continued to meet in the Parish Church for nearly twenty years. Never, perhaps, was this Edifice more truly the Church of the Parish than at this time, when two thousand people constantly assembled in it for worship, and often listened for hours to Owen in the prime of his days." Owen's pulpit, though

not used, still remains in connection with the Church.

Many Independent Churches were formed like that at Coggeshall, which did not necessitate their separation from the Establishment. The Pastor remained as Minister of the Parish. In some cases he also conducted services in a meeting-house to "Seceders." In others the Independent spirit existed without assuming the Congregational form. And this spirit is still finding expression among Episcopalians, many of whom are clamouring for a voice in the management of Church affairs, and in the election of Ministers. A Puritan Independency permeates the Establishment of this Country.

Lord Macaulay spoke of these Puritans as the most remarkable body of men the world had ever produced. He says that the objectionable parts of their character lay only on the surface. They were, nevertheless, abandoned to the satire of a licentious stage and press. And yet they formed the finest army Europe had ever seen, and made the name of England terrible to every aggressive nation. While crushing

tyranny in their own Country, they cowed oppression in other lands, and compelled even the Roman Pontiff to bring the horrors of the Inquisition to an end.

They were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior Beings and Eternal Interests. They habitually ascribed every event to the Will of God, for whose power nothing is too vast, for whose inspection nothing is too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him, was with them the great end of existence. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on the Intolerable Brightness, and to commune with Him face to face.

They recognised no title of superiority but His favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and dignities of this world. But they became deeply read in the oracles of God, and assured that their names were recorded in the Book of Life. Hence, those who met them in the halls of debate, or encountered them on fields of battle, soon came to learn that they

were animated and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

Such, in brief, is the great historian's estimate of these wise, brave, and honest Puritans, who grew up within the Establishment, and worshipped, for generations, in many of the Parish Churches of our country.

II

INDEPENDENTS IN CATHEDRALS

IN the previous chapter three parish churches have been mentioned where the Independents met, in one case conjointly with the Presbyterians and Episcopalians, in another with the Presbyterians only, and in the third case by themselves.

Before speaking of three Cathedrals in which they conducted their services it may be well to refer to some changes in the order of Christian worship. These changes were the need of the times; they were demanded by the people, and sanctioned by the Legislature.

During the twenty years which intervened between the opening of the Long Parliament and the Restoration of Monarchy, Episcopacy was disestablished and the Bishops were

driven from the House of Lords. It was then agreed "to lay aside the former liturgy"; and the Prayer Book was disused, though before any other authoritative regulation for public services had been provided.

On October 13, 1643, the Westminster Assembly was instructed by both Houses of Parliament to prepare a substitute for it. The members were convened every day except Saturday, from 9 until 12 o'clock, and each meeting was opened and closed with prayer. Seventy Sessions were spent in composing "THE DIRECTORY FOR PUBLIC WORSHIP," which was afterwards "passed as a whole by the Assembly." It was issued "for use throughout the three kingdoms," and proved eminently Scriptural, and considerate of religious scruples. Richard Baxter, too, while a member of this Assembly, issued his serious and earnest manual, "The Reformed Pastor," in order to incite ministers to holiness of life and consecration to their work.

In the Preface of this "Directory" it is said that the Lords and Commons, taking into serious consideration the manifold inconveniences that had arisen by the Book of

Common Prayer in the Kingdom, having resolved, in keeping with "the Covenant" to reform Religion according to the Word of God, had consulted the Reverend, Pious, and Learned Divines called together to co-operate with them. As a result the Lords and Commons ordered the "Directory" to be published on March 13, 1644; and "the Scribes of the Assembly were required to use all possible care and diligence that it be from time to time faithfully and exactly done." It is further stated that no one should be allowed to print the same but those authorised by the said Scribes.

The Presbyterianism which was thus partially established largely determined the character of this "Directory." The Episcopalians had been carrying the Church backward into Romanism, instead of converting Papists into Protestants; and its provisions cast a revealing light upon the superstitions it was sought to sweep away. Its aim was to exclude much that was alien to truly Spiritual Services. These were to be conducted in the language of the people, and Ministers were required to encourage their

Congregations to learn. They themselves were to read the Scriptures by chapters, and reserve all comments until the end. Hence, they were like the Levites, who "read in the Book of the Law, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning."

For the same reason Bibles were often chained to Lecterns in country churches that such as were instructed might read to those who gathered around to listen. "The word of the Lord was precious in those days; there was no open vision."

Prayers, too, were to be offered direct to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Petitions to angels, to saints, or to the dead, were forbidden. The Deity was to be approached through Christ by the aid of the Holy Spirit. These prayers may be judged by the preaching, for the published Sermons were most elevated in tone and teaching. The Puritans regarded the gift of prayer as of high importance in a minister, and deemed frequent use of the Prayer Book, however good it might be in itself, as evidence of intellectual poverty, spiritual apathy, or of indolence. "The Directory of Public Worship" was so worded

that "the individuality of the Minister, his growing spiritual experience, his gifts of expression and utterance, should come out in leading the devotions of the people; and acting as their messenger in prayer to God, as in preaching, he was acting as God's messenger to them."

There were, however, many difficulties in the way of arranging for congregations taking part in the Psalmody. A Report by Cranmer to Henry VIII. on translating the Liturgy into English says: "The song made thereunto should not be as full of notes, but as near as may be for every syllable a note, that it may be sung distinctly and devoutly." It was not to be "the quavering operose kind, much less that which is called figured." The Puritans too, had their opinions on the matter, for as early as 1536 they carried a protestation to the King in the Lower House of Convocation which styles "the playing at the organyes a foolish vanity."

In 1541 Edward VI. permitted antiphonal chanting, but the Psalms were to be sung out of the Bible, without paraphase. Such singing would be confined to choirs. At length

congregational music was introduced into England by the Exiles on their return from the Continent, who used the Genevan Psalter of 1556. Strype says, "As soon as they commenced singing in public in one little Church in London; immediately, not only the Churches in the neighbourhood, but even the towns far distant, began to vie with each other in the practice." He adds, "You may sometimes see at St. Paul's Cross, after the Service, six thousand persons, young and old of both sexes singing together." The people were evidently determined to praise God in spite of the Priests; for he further states that their doing so "sadly annoys the Mass Priests, for they perceive that by this means the sacred discourse sinks more deeply into the minds of men."

It appears, too, that Queen Elizabeth encouraged congregational singing. She came to the throne on November 17, 1558; but was a Protestant chiefly on political grounds, and was hostile to Puritans. She approved of it in order that "the laudable Science of Music" should be "held in estimation, and preserved in knowledge." There

was to be "a modest and distinct song," . . . "so used" . . . "that the words may be as plainly understanded as if read without singing; and yet for such comforting of those who delight in musick." In all such praise of Almighty God there was to be "a having respect that the sentence of the hymn may be understanded and perceived."

The Puritans shared the wishes of the people for congregational music; for in 1586 they proposed "that all Cathedral Churches may be put down where the Service of God is grievously abused by piping with organs, singing, ringing, and trowling of Psalms from one side to another." Music had been relegated to choirs, and praise was by proxy. "The absence of psalmody was a marked characteristic of Papal worship. The only approaches to it were chants, dirges, and wails, in a dead language, in which the people, as a rule, took no part." The music was more suggestive of "the shadow of death" than of "resurrection and life."

The Reformation under Wycliffe brought much brightness into Christian worship. The Lollards, as his followers, were singing pil-

grims. Abbeley says that their name signifies "praising God"—from the German *loben* "to praise," and *herr*, Lord; because they went about from place to place singing psalms and hymns. "In the Vulgar tongue of the Germans the word denotes a person who is continually praising God." The Reformation sought to make people happy, and the nation joyful.

The Lollards were "followed in their service of sacred song by certain Congregations of the Reformed Church of England, who began the practice of their own accord."

Henry Ainsworth, an English Divine of the Brownist Party, and an eminent Hebraist, proved himself most successful in rendering "the Psalms in prose and metre agreeably to the Hebrew," for public worship.

At length "the Psalms were sung by virtue of the Royal order in all the Churches and private dwellings . . . at the commencement and close of the morning Service; and also before and after the Sermon."

Sternhold had published nineteen Psalms in rhyme; and forty-four Psalms followed by Sternhold and Hopkins in 1542, "with

assistant notes to synge withall." Then "their uncouth rhymes grated the ear from every desk, the tedious drawl of each syllable far beyond the bounds of edification being heard from every pew."

When complaint was made of their Psalter being obsolete, "The Assembly of Divines" directed a Committee to examine and report on fifty of Rouse's Psalms. He was one of its Lay Assessors and Member of Parliament for Cornwall. His Psalter was substantially the Scotch Version still in use. When it had been altered and amended, the House of Commons accepted it. It was then sent back to the Divines at Westminster by an Order, bearing date November 20, 1643, for their consideration. After carefully perusing it they expressed their approval, saying that it might be useful and profitable to the Church if it were allowed to be publicly sung. Its use was then authorised by both Houses of Parliament.

The Independents were largely the means of securing this change. They doubted whether a versification of the Psalms was lawful. They saw that it opened the way for misinterpre-

tations, and that whole congregations might be set singing what was not scriptural. Some thought that even their promiscuous use was fraught with peril. They said that "Saints should sing, but Sinners should howl for sorrow of heart." Exception was also taken to the sole use of a Psalter. It was contended that many precious Truths from the New Testament were excluded from the singing, and that in confining themselves to the Psalms for praise and thanksgiving, they were little better than Jews. It was declared that "many an eminent Believer never sang the Name of Jesus until he sung it in Heaven."

The Independents, too, brought in congregational singing with instrumental accompaniments. Edwards states that one of their ministers in London had maintained "that Organs are a sanctified adjunct in the Service of God, and that if any man in the Church had a gift of making hymns he might bring them in to be sung with Organs, or other Instruments of Music." This was about 1645; and evidence exists that singing in public worship was adopted by the Independents in 1648. Cuthbert Sydenham, who belonged to

them, expressed the hope that "when men's hearts come in tune their voices will likewise."

Throughout these uses of Psalms and Hymns the Puritan spirit can be seen working for insuring praise by the people. A growing impatience was shown with intoning by Priests and chanting by Choirs. These were insufficient for interpreting the yearnings of worshippers. Members of Congregations would inspire each other while praising God.

But though advances were being made for singing in Services other serious difficulties existed. Printing was known, but prohibitive in price. Even ministers had to secure subscribers to enable them to publish their Sermons, long lists of whose names appear in some old Volumes. Copies of the Psalter were occasionally written by Pastors for members of their Congregations. The educated often transcribed these for their own use. When Psalters were printed most of the people were too poor to buy, or unable to read them. "The Directory for Public Worship," therefore, provided that each Minister, or some duly appointed official, should give out the Psalms line by line before they were

sung, in order that Worshippers might join in the Psalmody. And "the voice was to be tunably and gravely ordered"; and they were to "sing with the understanding," and to "make melody in their hearts," according to the Scriptures.

The need for such instructions is evident from Henry Ainsworth's writings, whose "Annotations" on the Pentateuch, Psalms, and Solomon's Song were separately published between 1612 and 1623 and collectively in 1627. He says: "Tunes for Psalms I find none set of God, so that each people must use the most grave, devout, and comforting manner of singing they know, according to the general rule, 'When ye come together every one of you hath a Psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.' 'Let all things be done decently, and in order'" (1 Cor. xiv. 26, 40). At length there seems to have been some improvement on this "go as you please" style, for he afterwards states: "We do now content ourselves with a joint harmonious singing of the Psalms of Holy Scripture to

the instruction and comfort of our hearts, and praise of our God."

Though there were only seven Independent Ministers among the one hundred and fifty members of the Westminster Assembly; and the Presbyterians insured the acceptance of "The Directory for Public Worship" by both Houses of Parliament, the other Churches evidently agreed to it. At length there was a conjoint arrangement with regard to Psalmody. Their aim was to banish superstition, and to prevent a further surrender to mere ceremonies. While excluding everything that tended to formality, they sought to help the people to audibly and heartily participate in Divine Service.

These changes were in accord with the wishes of the new Occupants of the Cathedrals. Dr. Stoughton speaks of Wells Cathedral as "still showing in its proud front the three hundred magnificent sculptured figures, which form a Bible in stone, as when used by the Presbyterian Dr. Burgess; who, S. M. S. Pereira says, 'purchased the revenues of the See, and the buildings pertaining to it; and took up his

abode in its stately residence, until the Revolution drove him from it to give place to its proper Occupant.'" Meanwhile, it was ordered, says the worthy Doctor, that the Inhabitants of St. Cuthbert's Parish, forming, it may be presumed, an Independent Congregation, should make use of it also as their place of worship.

The alteration thus taking place in connection with Wells Cathedral was seen as complete at Exeter; and Dr. Stoughton describes the curious effect of separate Congregations meeting for worship in the same Building. He says: "The Edifice was divided into two parts by a brick wall, as are some of the larger Churches in Scotland, and on the Continent, at the present day. The choir, called 'East Peter's,' was used by the Presbyterians. Under the vaulted roof—upon which, among the fruits and tendrils of the filbert and the vine, the Presbyterian worshipper might have seen a coronation of the Virgin, and Angels censing the Mother and the Child—Robert Atkins, their Minister, esteemed one of the best Preachers in that part of England, fulfilled

the Ministerial Office with eminent popularity and success."

At the same time the exquisitely stained glass of the East perpendicular window, all radiant with the glory of Roman Catholic Saints, shed on him its tinted lights while he stood in the pulpit, in his Genevan gown, with the hourglass at his side.

The Nave, called "West Peter's," was occupied by a Congregation of Independents; who, under similarly incongruous circumstances, entered the gorgeous porch, decorated with crowds of images, to listen to the Ministry and to follow the devotions of their Pastor, Lewis Stukeley. "There he preached and prayed, while the beautiful Minstrels' gallery, with its array of winged angels, having citterns, trumpets, guitars, and all manner of instruments of music, retained its position untouched, and preserved its adornments unharmed." Such "a middle wall of partition" undoubtedly accentuated the differences between the worshippers in the Cathedral.

In Worcester the Congregationalists occupied several of the Churches, as well as the

Cathedral. In his Scholarly Book entitled "Nonconformity in Worcester" Professor William Urwick, M.A., gives a most interesting insight into the changes that took place in the Churches of that City. The Independents worshipped in St. Martin's, All Saints and Nicholas, and St. Andrew's. In the Edgar Tower Manuscripts the Cathedral itself is referred to as "a public meeting place for the Service of God."

The Minister, too—Mr. Simon Moore—is spoken of as "a very faithful preacher of God's Word, and of singular good affection to the Government of the Commonwealth," who had "suffered great losses by the Scotch Army at Worcester." "The Committee for the City and County" also states that he had "a very small and incompetent maintenance for his great pains in preaching the Word, and the performance of other Ministerial Offices." Some grants were, therefore, made to him out of the revenues of the Dean and Chapter, for which his receipt was accepted. He was styled by Richard Baxter "The Old Independent." He was evidently a well-accredited Minister, and stood high

in the esteem of the Officials of the City as well as the Citizens. But at the Ejection Bishop Morley came with "a long train of Ecclesiastics, Deans, and Canons; exchanging the simplicity of Congregationalism for Prayer Book royalism in ritual and dogma." The scattered Independents from the Cathedral and the three Parish Churches were gathered up by the Rev. Thomas Badland, who formed the Church which continues to worship in Angel Street Chapel to-day.

The Rev. Richard Baxter's reference to Mr. Simon Moore is a reminder of some differences then existing between the Presbyterians and Independents. These had been trained in an Establishment which sustained its Ministers from National resources for many centuries. The State Religion was largely that of the Presbyterians, and their Ministers would think themselves justified in receiving public money.

In the year 1657, when Parliament presented a petition to Cromwell asking for Religious toleration, there was an attempt to impose a rate on behalf of four Ministers,

for whose support no funds were available. It was *a transition period*, and Congregations had to be trained to Voluntaryism. They could not, all at once, free themselves from the trammels of the Establishment. Some Pastors, too, were appointed by Town Authorities, as well as chosen by Churches. In such a period they could not work and starve. Many of them spent their own resources while serving the people. Others received a most inadequate return for their devotion, and were only in part sustained by the Congregations.

It is candidly admitted by Dr. Halley, a former Principal of New College, that "independence of State pay, and State control, was no part of the Ecclesiastical Polity of the early Independents." Nevertheless, numbers of them resisted all attempts at taxation for Religious Institutions, and steadfastly refused to sanction the collection of public money for their maintenance. John Milton declaimed against these Independents receiving support from Local Authorities, contending that their very name would condemn them for doing so. Time was necessary for carry-

ing their principles fully into practice. These are now honoured by their Successors, who are the most sturdy Opponents of public money being spent in the interests of any of the Churches.

Their Scriptural Ideal of the Church also became somewhat dimmed and distorted while passing through their own minds and hearts. It was further obscured in their fellowship with those who withdrew from the world, and joined them. These had simply to go on together towards perfection. But as they grew purer in thought and nobler in feeling their Ideal rose more clearly into view. Then it appealed to them like an attractive picture, calling them out into unceasing consecration for reproducing it. As the Spirit projected it before their minds they caused it to flash upon the community, until many felt the future was big with promise. They strove to make the Apostolic Church re-appear in this country.

Though they sometimes failed to realise that Ideal among themselves, they did splendid service in holding it aloft before others. It is still the noblest in Christendom. And

our Successors will lift it higher, and carry it farther than we are doing, until it lives, and has its being, among all nations. It has "come down from God out of Heaven," and will yet be made glorious upon earth. Then true Christians will rejoice together as Brethren in whole-hearted surrender to their only Head, who is Jesus Christ.

III

WARRIORS AT PRAYER

IT is interesting to notice how the spirit of Puritan Independency which existed in the Church also pervaded the Army. This may be in part explained by the fact that many members of the one were soldiers in the other. And its Commander, being animated by this same spirit, imprinted his own strong Individuality alike upon Officers and men.

His surrender thereto was in accord with his family tradition and ancestry. He had descended from Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, who was Minister of Henry VIII. during the Reformation, and destroyer of many of the monasteries. His nephew Richard, who assumed his surname, also entered the King's service, and assisted in

curbing the power of the Priests and breaking up their establishments. In consequence Oliver is often credited with much destructive work that was done by his two ancestors.

Little is known of his early life. It is, however, certain that he was educated by Dr. Thomas Beard at the Free School in Huntingdon, whose Puritan convictions were so strong against the Papacy as to cause him to maintain that the Pope was Anti-Christ. Such a teacher would leave a deep imprint upon his young Pupil, the future Protector. Oliver was afterwards sent to Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, which Laud declared was a nursery of Puritanism.

Tradition and training, therefore, largely account for his tendencies. Though he never avowed himself as belonging to Sect or Party, he was, as Baillie called him—THE GREAT INDEPENDENT. Hence, he said, "we must have *men of Religion* to cope with Charles' *men of honour*" (meaning men of rank). "A good notion," replied Hampden, "if it could be executed." And when exception was taken to some, who were joining the

Army, because of their opinions, he resolutely denounced such intolerance, and declared that love of Country was sufficient recommendation. He spoke of those who had rallied to his standard as "a lovely company," and said, "They are honest, sober, and expect to be used *as men.*"

He himself spent much time in prayer before sieges and battles. Preachers were found among his Officers, as well as the Soldiers. He seldom fought without some text of Scripture to support him. Thus sustained, he advanced confident of success. At the beginning of his career he sought to make his own Regiment "a gathered Church."

In due course the whole Army became like his "Ironsides." Prince Rupert gave this title to Cromwell, which was subsequently transferred to his troops, on account of their impenetrable strength, which could be by no means broken or divided. Whether his officers were Gentlemen or Yeomen, he appointed them because he believed they would prove conscientious in the service they rendered. And when a Colonel once complained that a Captain was a better preacher than a

fighter, Oliver said that "a man who prayed and preached would be inspired with greater courage because of his knowledge of God in Christ." The efficiency and good conduct he required from Officers they also expected from Subordinates, until the whole Army became animated by the devout spirit of its Commander; of which Clarendon said, it was "an Army whose order and discipline, whose sobriety and manners, whose courage and success, made it famous and terrible over the world." And in later days Oliver proudly added, "They were never defeated."

This Army was largely composed of Independents, every man of whom became, more or less, a polemic, and gained many converts. One regiment entirely consisted of them. They were encouraged to take an intelligent interest in their Country's affairs, until convinced that they were fighting for a righteous cause. Though Cromwell's resolve to secure Godly men as his Soldiers was looked upon as impracticable by Statesmen and Military Leaders, he, nevertheless, sought to enrol such as believed that while serving their nation they were serving God.

The attitude of Oliver and his Army was determined by the King's action. The first speech he made in Parliament was in the year 1629, in which he protested against a Romanising of the Established Church by Archbishop Laud. The House, having resolved itself into "a Grand Committee of Religion," was proceeding to inquire into the doings of the Ecclesiastics, when Charles suddenly dissolved the Assembly. Popery, in consequence, had a free hand during the next seven years. Then "the Star Chamber" became an English "Inquisition." The ears of Nonconformists were cut off, their cheeks branded with hot irons, while they themselves were thrown into prison and their property was confiscated. Though Cromwell was the most tolerant man of his age, he groaned under the tyranny of Laud, and sought to deliver his long-suffering countrymen.

The Army feared lest everything should be wrested from them which their Comrades had fallen to acquire. Cromwell was a Monarchist by tradition and feeling, and would gladly have restored Charles I. to the throne could he have done so with safety to his Country.

The King thought to play off the Independents against the Presbyterians, saying, "I am not without hope that I shall be able to draw either the Presbyterians or Independents to side with me for extirpating one another, that I shall really be King again."

The eyes of Cromwell and his Ironsides were upon this design. Charles was prepared to promise anything in order to secure his return to the throne. But the Independents felt that while the King lived there would be great danger of such a league with the Presbyterians. Though a minority in Parliament, they became so strong in the Army as to rise to supreme power in the State. They were reluctant to be disloyal, but convinced some decisive action must be taken, and that Charles ought not to be allowed to sacrifice any more of his subjects. The cruelties suffered compelled them to seize their weapons, and to become resolute in wielding them. They felt oppressed by a sense of responsibility in the serious crisis that had arisen. There was no question of a Military Dictatorship. They were contending with traitors rather than with aliens, and their supreme

concern was to learn the Divine Will, and at all costs to obey it.

Much devoutness characterised the Campaigning of this Independent Army. It must have been thrilling in the extreme to the people of districts through which its warriors marched to hear Officers giving out Psalms, and to listen while the Soldiers were chanting them. The sympathies of Civilians would be so enlisted as to incite them to sing, until through their song they also caught the spirit of the Word of God. On a ridge known as "Mill Hill" the Parliamentary troops mustered, from which their camp fires could be seen and their Psalms heard. "The Cavaliers," who had been drinking the King's health in the village street the night before, were rallied and reviewed by His Majesty, clad in complete armour, with sword in hand. They greeted him with ringing cheers, eleven thousand strong, on an elevated spot known as "The Dust Hill." The watchword of the one Army was "God is our Strength," and of the other "Queen Mary." At the beginning of the battle the Royalists were victorious, but in the issue the Cromwellians triumphed.

A thousand of the King's Soldiers were slain; four thousand five hundred became prisoners; and among the prizes secured was the King's coach, with his Cabinet, the correspondence in which showed that his oath was worthless and his intrigues traitorous, clearly proving that if the Country were to be saved he must cease to reign. The words in the ballad, "THE CAVALIER," might have been used by many a Royalist that day—

"Then 'Spur and sword' was our battle word, and we made their helmets ring,
Shouting like madmen, while we struck 'For God and for the King!'
But, though they snuffled Psalms, to give these rebel Knaves their due,
When the roaring shot poured thick and hot, they were stalwart men and true."

A like devout spirit was shown in Cromwell's despatch to "The Speaker of the House of Commons," in which he ascribed the victory to the Divine Hand, and gave the glory to God.

These Puritan Independents were equally earnest in studying the Scriptures. There was a tradition that every warrior in Cromwell's

Army was provided with a Bible. It was for a long time difficult to confirm this, because no Bible small enough to be carried in time of war was known to exist. Happily a copy has been discovered by Mr. George Livermore, of Cambridge Port, Massachusetts, called "The Soldier's Pocket Bible." This was probably one of many copies taken over to America by exiles from this country. It is stated on the title-page to have been "compiled by Edward Calamy, and issued for the use of the Commonwealth Army in 1643." He is said to have acted as an Army Chaplain, but this is not certain. He speaks of it as "To supply the want of the whole Bible which a Soldier cannot conveniently carry about him." The motto on the Preface is from Josh. i. 8: "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

This Bible consisted of stirring passages from the Genevan Version of the Old Testament, which was at that time in use among

the Puritans and Independents. These related to battle scenes and to Commanders' appeals and prayers inciting their Armies to trust in God. It contained only some three or four verses from the New Testament. This copy is now in the United States, and another is in the British Museum. They are the only ones known to exist, but the Book has recently been re-published in facsimile.

Two different opinions with regard to it are appended to this reprint. The one is from *a man of peace*, Mr. Francis Fry, who says the work is a "poor and artful substitute indeed for that Book in which we read, 'Love your enemies,' 'Do good to them that hate you,' &c., though, no doubt, better suited to the purposes of Cromwell." The other is from *a man of war*, Field-Marshal the Right Hon. Viscount Wolseley, K.P., G.C.B., who says: "In my humble opinion the Soldier who carries this Bible in his pack possesses what is of far higher value than the proverbial Marshal's baton; for if he carries its teachings in his head, and lets it rule his heart and conduct, he will certainly be happy, and most probably eminently successful."

This Bible was generally buttoned between the coat and the doublet, next to the heart, and was read daily. It was sometimes studied around camp fires during the eventide, and in tents at night. In singing these militant Psalms, and studying such earnest prayers, the Soldiers would gain an increasing sense of the Divine Presence, and become fired with courage while going into battle as with a clarion cry, "Now let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered; like as the mist vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away."

In addition to their songs and studies there were prayers. It must have been difficult amid the alarms of war to learn what "the Will of the Lord" was concerning their movements. Some claimed that "His Will" had been clearly revealed to them, but Cromwell cautioned them against self-deception. He told such in one of their meetings that he could not say he had received anything he could speak of in the Name of the Lord. While convinced that men might still "be spoken unto by the Spirit of God," he added, "We are very apt, all of us, to call that faith which perhaps may be but carnal imagination."

He rather sought to learn the Divine mind in the progress of events, though he felt that prayer enabled him to interpret providences. He believed that hitherto there had been such a concurrence of events as was specially overruled for carrying him into his responsible position, which he must continue to occupy for advancing the Kingdom of God.

In those anxious times prayer and exhortation were common among lowly persons as well as those of exalted station. Pepys says that a friend told him "the King by name, with all his Dignities, was prayed for by them they call "*Fanatiques*," as heartily and powerfully as in any other of the Churches that were thought better ; and that let the King think as he will, it is them that must help him in the day of war."

Richard Baxter and Philip Henry also testified to the Holiness observable in the lives of Officers and Soldiers, and to their self-denial in their Country's cause.

Bulstrode Whitelock, Keeper of the Great Seal of England, was closely associated with Puritan Independency, and used to exhort. Among the larger portion of the Communion

Plate at Hare Court Chapel there are "four silver dishes with sunk centres and broad edges" which were presented by him. "They bear his arms, and those of Mary Wilson, his third wife." While this "eminent Lawyer" was Ambassador to the Queen of Sweden at Christiania he had a conversation with Her Majesty on the subject of exhortation, and spoke of many Officers in the Army as praying with their Soldiers, and preaching to them. Such was the diffusion of Religion throughout its ranks that those composing them commended each other to the care of the "Lord of Hosts."

A remarkable devotional meeting was held by many of the Officers in Windsor Castle. In the year 1648 England was threatened with an invasion of forty thousand Scotchmen, "to deliver the King from Sectaries," who was a prisoner in Carisbrook Castle. Parliament was divided, the nation restless, and the City Royalist in its sympathies. Conflicts seemed inevitable. Such prospects were more than enough to fill the small party in power with misgivings, if not with dismay.

In the midst of these serious complications

the Officers of the Army gave themselves to great searchings of heart, and were led to acknowledge that policy rather than principle had controlled their minds, inciting them to govern according to their fears rather than by faith. In consequence, disaster threatened to overwhelm their cause. At the close of the day no decision was reached, and their prayer meeting ended with a feeling that it was still their duty to seek Divine direction.

They met again on the morning of *the next day*, when many prayed, and spoke from the Word of God. Cromwell was present, and appealed to them seriously to consider their conduct as Christians and their action as an Army. They feared lest the Lord had withdrawn Himself in anger, and were anxious to be assured of His abiding Presence.

Then they agreed to meet on *the third day*, when they unitedly became convinced that they had "leaned to their own understanding," and failed to exercise an unwavering trust in the Almighty. Major Goffe also urged upon their attention the words, "Turn ye at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My spirit unto

you, I will make known My words unto you" (Prov. i. 23).

The result was to create self-loathing among those assembled, and a conviction that God had been just in His dealings with them. Their sin and their duty now stood out in such clear contrast that they could not speak. They were overcome with emotion, and gave way to bitter weeping. Then, surrendering to Divine guidance, they went forth to assail the enemies of their country, assured that it was their duty, as Carlyle tells us, "to call Charles Stuart, that man of blood, to an account for that blood he had shed, and mischief he had done to his utmost, against the Lord's Cause and People in these poor nations."

The sequel was seen in ANOTHER THREE DAYS' PRAYER-MEETING, not merely among the Officers, but by the whole Army. This was held in St. Albans. The Abbey there is a wonderful embodiment of Gothic Architecture from Norman to Perpendicular. It carries us backward through Saxon to Roman times, but this meeting held within its walls was probably such as had never been known during its history. The late Rev. Professor

Urwick, M.A., who had the freest access to its archives by the courtesy of the Dean and Chapter, says: "The monks and clergy with their confessionals, processions, and ritual, had been swept away. The high and dry Parson Mr. Roger Williams was subsequently ejected, and John Brown, a protégé of Laud's, deposed for incompetence. Then the Buildings were bought by the Citizens for £600, as their Parish Church; who by their self-chosen Mayor and Burgesses, appointed their own Minister, who was mainly supported by free-will offerings. The endowment amounted to only £10 per annum."

Professor Urwick says that the parishioners chose the Rev. John Newton and the Rev. John Geree as their Pastors. While the Independent Church was in possession of the Abbey, the Army, being quartered at St. Albans, held this three days' prayer meeting. Many forms of service have been conducted in it, but none more solemn than those held by the Soldiers. The fact that they were proposed and carried out shows the devout spirit which existed among them. Was the Abbey equal to holding the troops, or did different

regiments attend each day, or companies at stated times? These interesting questions can be asked but not easily answered. Were supplications heard from Soldiers as well as Officers? Did the Rev. John Geree preside? Was he a Leader in any of the devotions while the Army was asking to be Divinely led? This Minister was something more than an anxious Spectator, for the issue so agitated him that it caused his death. He was so affected that he died of a broken heart, when he felt that the Lord had rejected the House of Stuart from again ruling over England.

After these days of devotion were over there was some consultation, possibly a Council of War. A resolve was reached that the King must suffer if the nation were to be saved; and a "Remonstrance" was drawn up in November, 1648, which sealed the fate of Charles I. It required that "the Sovereignty of the People must be proclaimed, and the King elected by their Representatives." A Declaration was prepared on the 16th of that month, in which His Majesty was held to be guilty of the blood shed in the first and second wars. This was presented on

the 20th; and Cromwell having defeated the Royal Armies, the Commonwealth became supreme throughout the country.

Charles was tried at Westminster Old Hall, which had been built by William Rufus and re-built by Richard II. Though it had "re-sounded with acclamations at the Inauguration of thirty Kings, it was the Hall where he confronted the High Court of Justice, and was condemned to death," the Clerk reading out the Sentence that "Charles Stuart should be put to death by severing his head from his body."

Bishop Juxon preached privately before him, on the Sunday preceding his execution, from the words, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ" (Rom. ii. 16). A scaffold was erected before Whitehall, and immense crowds filled the spacious streets in front of it. Shotted cannon were turned on all the avenues of approach to repress tumult or put down any rising among the people. Then the doomed Monarch kneeled down, and laying his bared neck upon the headsman's block, the gleaming axe fell, and his Spirit fled away to God.

Another Sermon was preached in Westminster Abbey the day after the execution. Dr. John Owen came from Coggeshall for the occasion. His text was, "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord" (Jer. xv. 19, 20).

Anthony Wood asserted that Dr. Owen "applauded the Regicides, and declared the death of the most admirable King to be fair and righteous." The well-known animus of the writer shows itself in this statement, because there is nothing in the discourse to justify it.

On the other hand, Mr. Orme said Dr. Owen was "exceedingly cautious of committing himself by expressing an opinion either of the Court or the Country Party; which plainly implies that while he was not at liberty to condemn, he was unwilling to justify." The Doctor told the Parliament very faithfully "that much of the evil which had come upon the country had originated within their own

walls," and warned them against "oppression, self-seeking, and contrivances for persecution." He also added in faithful censure what equally applied to Princes and People, saying, "When Kings command unrighteous things, and the people suit them with willing compliance, none doubts but the destruction of them both is just and righteous."

Though Anthony Wood rarely had a word of praise for a Puritan, he said of Dr. Owen: "He was a man of universal affability, ready discourse, liberal, graceful, and courteous demeanour, that spoke him certainly, whatever else he might be, one that was more the gentleman than most of the Clergy. His personage was proper and comely. He had a very graceful behaviour in the pulpit, a winning, insinuating deportment, and would by the persuasion of his oratory, in conjunction with other outward advantages, wind the affections of his auditors as he pleased."

During the progress of these startling events the Presbyterians had been worshipping in Westminster Abbey, and the Rev. Stephen Marshall, B.D., sometimes officiated. While at Finchingfield in Essex, he was occasionally

appointed to preach before the Long Parliament in London, and some sermons delivered on these occasions were published.

There is this curious addendum to one of these, dated February 23, 1641: "It is this day ordered by the House of Commons that no man shall print the Sermon preached at the last Fast Day before the House of Commons by Mr. Calamy and Mr. Marshall, beside themselves, for the space of two months, without the particular license and approbation of the said House of Commons." Whether this prohibition was for securing to their authors the first profits of publication, or as an official guarantee for accuracy of reproduction in those critical times, is not stated. It seems strange that the issue of a Discourse should be safeguarded by such a vote, which was sufficiently stringent as to carry with it certain penalties if it were disregarded.

The purport of another Sermon is traceable in its imposing Dedication. It was preached on January 18, 1643, at a Solemn Feasting and Thanksgiving. The text was, "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. cxxxiii. 1.)

It was addressed to "The Right Honourable the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament; His Excellency the Earl of Essex, with the rest of the Noble and Worthy Commanders; the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor; the Court of Aldermen, and the Common Council of the City of London; the Reverend the Assembly of Divines; the Honourable and Reverend Commissioners from the Church of Scotland." This Dedication alone is a record of current events, and an epitome of History.

The Service was for Thanksgiving to God "for purging and reforming a backsliding and polluted Church," and "for Union after so many designs to divide, and ruin the Kingdom."

The changes taking place in the Establishment were seen centring in the Abbey at Westminster. In the year 1645 there had been a special Ordinance of Parliament which altered its constitution. This may be traced, says Dr. Stoughton, in a Manuscript Volume in the Library at Zion College. The Dean and Chapter having been dismissed as delinquents, the services of Lambert Osbaldeston,

who had been Canon, and also Head Master at Westminster School, were retained. He then assumed the management of the Abbey affairs, in conjunction with the Earl of Northumberland, and others appointed to act with them. About this time a Presbyterian Church grew up from among the Episcopalian Puritans. This Church was constituted "a little before Cromwell assumed the supreme power," and the Rev. Stephen Marshall, B.D., who had been principal Chaplain of the Parliamentary Army, was appointed its Minister, and received £200 a year and a house. He was also Lecturer at St. Margaret's Church.

But the Independents, having become supreme in the Nation, soon rose into ascendancy in the Church. They stood forth in separation from the Presbyterians when these sought to impose their Creed and Government upon the country. Cromwell, too, resisted their attempts to do so. At the same time the Presbyterians showed a decided hostility to his liberal views of Religion. They openly withdrew from the Independents after the King's defeat at Marston Moor. The Independents specially distinguished themselves in

that decisive battle, and rose into power with the victorious Protector.

These changes made Mr. Marshall's pastorate at the Abbey untenable. The Presbyterians having separated from the Independents in National Affairs, would become increasingly distinct from them in the Church. Hence it is stated that he "could not well perform the services any longer." At length he gave place to the Independents. Moreover, he appears to have been closely associated with the Episcopalians, from the fact that three of his five daughters married clergymen. He had great abilities, and his discourses were fervid and eloquent. His influence over Parliament was acknowledged even by Lord Clarendon. He died on November 19, 1655, and was buried in the South Transept of Westminster Abbey.

IV

SOME ABBEY SERVICES

IT will be interesting to refer to three Independent Churches which were formed in connection with Abbeys, as we have spoken of those founded within the same number of Cathedrals, and also Parish Churches. Our doing so will serve still further to show the immense hold which the Puritan spirit gained on the grandest national buildings, as well as over the congregations associated with them.

The first that might be mentioned is Romsey Abbey, which was founded by King Edward the Elder a thousand years ago. That wonderful pile is not in ruins, but still used for services by the Episcopalians. The Rev. John Warren was in possession of it during the Commonwealth, who is spoken of in the

local list of Vicars as an "Intruder." This would arise from the feelings entertained among some who were hostile to his views.

The Dissenting Church there was largely composed of Independents and Presbyterians, who attended his ministry. The latter are especially mentioned in the oldest documents referring to its history. It was actually formed by Rev. Thomas Warren, the ejected Rector of Houghton, in the same county. Whether these Ministers were related is at present unknown. The earlier Meeting-house was erected within the old precincts of the Abbey, and the modern building which stands on the same site is attached to its wall, and known as "the Abbey Congregational Church."

As we have seen, an Independent Church was formed in St. Albans Abbey. One of its services proved to be tragic. The Rev. William Haworth, Minister of St. Peter's, was preaching the Funeral Sermon for a Mrs. Elizabeth Turril, when a Major Crosby rushed forward and pointed a pistol at him while he was standing in the pulpit. Then Mr. John Townsend said, "Pray make no disturbance,

Major, it is the Sabbath Day"; upon which Crosby replied, "You rogue! Do you tell me of the Sabbath Day?" and, lowering his pistol, shot him.

The Minister was saved, but his Defender sacrificed. This brave man's body lies buried in the Abbey, and the register is dated May 5, 1662. Such an incident not only indicated the excitement of those times, but afterwards showed the difficulty of securing justice. Mr. Townsend belonged to the Independent Congregation in the Abbey. When Crosby was brought before Harbottle Grimstone "that unjust Judge threatened the Jury," and the criminal was acquitted.

The narrator of this tragedy, in a pamphlet entitled "Law Unknown; or, Judgment Unjust," published in 1662, exclaims, "Think not that God will be mocked; the story rings far and near! Wherever the name of 'Harbottle Grimstone,' from henceforth, shall be mentioned, let this story be told for the shame and reproof of all contrivers of injustice and unrighteousness in the seat of Judicature."

The grandest of these National Buildings

is now to engage our attention. We have to trace the origin, and study the history of—

The Independent Church in Westminster Abbey.

In doing so it should not be forgotten that though many such Societies were founded as distinct organisations, *external* to the Establishment, numbers of them were formed from among the Episcopalians, and continued to worship in Cathedrals and Abbeys, Priories, and Parish Churches, all over the country.

When the clergy, with their rites and ceremonies, were ejected in 1643 from Westminster the Presbyterianism which followed was not imposed by Scotchmen from without, but evolved from within. This fact was confirmed by the judgment pronounced by Justice Kekewich in the Tooting case. It nevertheless brought with it a tendency to over-organisation similar to that which characterises the Scotch Church to-day. These Presbyterians were not only content to fetter themselves with Creeds and Covenants, but were

eager to enforce them upon others. Then the Independents, who had dwelt with them in unity, asserted their liberty, and resolved that they would not be bound by any form of Establishment.

During these changes there were two classes connected with the Abbey between whom it is important to distinguish. The one may be spoken of as merely reformers, who would have been content if the priestly idea were abandoned, all vestments abolished, and the Altar Table once again used as the Lord's Table. Simplicity of worship was earnestly sought, and to be secured at every sacrifice.

But there was another class, who, while believing that all such changes were necessary to a Scriptural conception of the Church, also earnestly contended that character, and rightful relationships to Christ, must determine who should be its members. Hence, in keeping with a phraseology in use among the Puritans, the Independent Church is spoken of as having been "*gathered*" in the Abbey. It was not sufficient that those belonging to it should merely bear the name of Christ, but indispensable for them to show they had

something of His nature. They must "first give themselves to the Lord, and then to His People."

The Minister was His representative around whom they rallied, who "gathered" them into corporate union in recognition of their vital relations with their Saviour. He made no special claim of being able to "discern spirits," but, casting responsibility upon "applicants for Church Membership," he encouraged them to unite with their fellow-members in striving after Likeness to Christ.

Such were some of the characteristics of the Church formed in Westminster Abbey in the year 1650. It is spoken of as one of the most ancient of such Churches. Wilson says we have "a clearer and more connected account of its history than of many others of a much later date." This account is "corroborated by Dr. Calamy" in his "Continuation" of "The Nonconformists' Memorial."

Several collateral particulars of considerable interest, and some importance, deserve a passing comment. It was said, "on the authority of an ancient Member, that the learned and eminent Dr. John Owen was the

founder and first Minister of this Church." There was also a tradition "that the congregation met together for public worship sometime in the House of Lords."

A person of the name of Curry, too, who was between eighty and ninety years of age, told Dr. Gibbons, while he was visiting her at some almshouses near St. Clement's Church, in the Strand, that "her husband was baptized in the House of Peers." Wilson adds that "it is probable this was the place where the Church meetings were held."

That Dr. Owen should be thought to be its founder admits of explanation. A minister of his brilliant gifts, who by serious research had risen to the Congregational Ideal as revealed from the Scriptures, and so successfully worked it out in the Parish Church at Coggeshall, would become zealous in seeking to multiply such Churches. He most likely availed himself of many opportunities for forming them, especially in London.

When, therefore, the Upper House was vacated it would be readily used by earnest Christians for Divine Worship. Such a place in itself, and the novelty of its Services, must

have proved an attraction; while Dr. Owen's power as a preacher would draw multitudes to hear him. He could not, however, have been their stated Pastor, but probably exercised an occasional oversight of their interests during his frequent visits to the Metropolis.

It is evident that some connection existed between those meeting there and the Congregation in the Abbey. "The ancient member" belonged to them, and "the elderly person" whom Dr. Gibbons visited distinctly spoke of her husband as baptized at one of their meetings. Apart from the tradition recorded, and the opinion expressed, the statements are too explicit to be disregarded. They were made independently of each other, and those making them were looking back amid their declining days from the Abbey to the House of Lords. They must have left the Abbey with the ejected Church. And there are no memories so vivid as those connected with early life, and none so ardently cherished as when relating to the beginnings of Christian experience. As statements they confirm each other. There is no evidence whatever of collusion between the speakers, and any

attempt to deceive could have served no purpose nor secured any advantage.

The inference is that this Society was more a *Congregation* than a Church. It was in a formative condition and without a Minister. An Independent Church was being fostered in that House while the Presbyterians were occupying the Abbey. But as changes were in progress which were predictive of the one Body taking the place of the other, it must have been felt that two Churches of the same order could not be necessary so close together. They might provoke rivalries such as would prove hindrances to progress. As the Society in the House of Lords was only assuming an organised form, and its Members had not called a Pastor, they probably hesitated to do so while there was any likelihood of uniting with their co-religionists in the Abbey.

Moreover, the House of Lords was not a place of worship. When, therefore, the Presbyterians withdrew from the Abbey the Independents from the Upper House would join their fellow-Christians who were making that Abbey their rallying centre. The two persons named appear to have done so, and

they were probably associated with others who helped to form one united and powerful Church.

That Church must have been "gathered" from several sources. Some Presbyterians most likely remained and united with its members, not only because of their residing near the Abbey, but on account of having learned to love the very building so closely identified with their spiritual experiences. They would also feel bound to some of their fellow-Christians by ties which had become sacred. And hostilities from without were driving them into the closest cohesion, and common sufferings were intensifying their mutual sympathies. Their relationships were neither superficial nor merely social. Differences were not accentuated to the extent they were in after years. Some Presbyterians would, therefore, continue to worship with the Independents as these had done with the Presbyterians, as long as the Rev. Stephen Marshall remained minister in the Abbey.

Hence, the Church there was almost certainly composed of those who came from the House of Lords, and of the Presbyterians and

Independents who still worshipped in the Abbey. Others would be drawn into their communion from the ordinary Congregations, and some might be added to their number from the populace outside. These multiform sources would supply the members of this "gathered" Church during the early years of its distinguished career. In the formative period of its history it cast off all Ecclesiasticism, emerged from Presbyterianism, freed itself from fetters of every kind, and rose into spiritual strength and organised usefulness. Like the Independents generally, this Christian assembly gained large accessions from all classes to their Cause. There was thus a near approach to working out their grand Ideal in Parish Churches, Cathedrals, and Abbeys, all over the land. And the strongest and most influential Congregational Church that has ever existed conducted its Services in the noblest of our National Abbeys in the Capital City of the Empire.

Hence, it is clear that these earlier Churches were evolved from Episcopalianism. The three thousand ejected clergymen were ordained according to its rites, and were the

noblest of their Order. Their members were duly baptized and confirmed Christians, who worshipped in consecrated Buildings. These Clergymen also set apart their Successors "for the work of the Ministry," who in their turn ordained those who followed them. In coming out from Episcopacy Pastors and Peoples brought with them whatever blessings it could bestow. They also justified their mission by wielding a transforming power in hamlets and villages, in towns and cities, yea, all over the great Metropolis. If, therefore, there be any truth in Apostolic Succession, or virtue in Episcopal Grace, these Independent Churches have received some enriching from Bishops and Archbishops, through whom it might be traced backward even to the Pope himself.

Congregational Ministers are, therefore, still in this line of Succession. They have these historic Credentials for supporting the Claim. But they refrain from making it, because they have no faith in any such teaching. Many Scholarly Clergymen repudiate it. Reliable Church Historians say it has no foundation, and is unscriptural. Independents are content to point to "the Divine Commission" of

their Missionaries and Ministers, which has shown itself adown the Centuries in many Martyrdoms among the heathen, and in their sublime devotion to Christ all over the world.

This "Commission" shone out conspicuously in the Character and Career of

THE
FIRST MINISTER
OF THIS
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
AT
WESTMINSTER.

The Rev. William Strong, M.A., was educated at St. Catherine's, Cambridge, under the celebrated Dr. Sibbes, and became Fellow of his College. His abilities were recognised before he was called to the Pastorate at the Abbey, and considerable prominence was accorded to him. On coming to London he was appointed one of the "Tryers" for examining and approving Preachers, and his

name appears among the most distinguished Divines of the day.

The Synod of Westminster having dissolved with the Parliament, a Society was formed by Cromwell at Whitehall on March 20, 1645, composed of twenty-nine Clergymen and nine Laymen, who were the very flower of Puritanism. They consisted of Independents, Presbyterians, and Baptists; and Oliver was anxious, above all things, that they should be "men of wisdom who had the love of the Gospel in their hearts." "Without their approbation none were admitted to the spiritual oversight of the people." "They did a great deal of good to the Church, and saved many a Congregation from ungodly, drunken teachers." Mr. Strong shared their anxious and responsible duties. He also became a member of the Assembly of Divines at Westminster and one of the seven Lecturers in the Abbey, whose lectures were delivered between seven and eight o'clock each morning.

He was the Special Preacher on a day of public humiliation before the House of Commons on December 31, 1645. Think of him on that occasion thus addressing his august

Congregation. He said: "At that day ye shall be stripped of all your honours and dignities which are now upon you, and you shall stand upon even ground with the rest of the world; for all these Offices and Relations are but for the time of this life. Afterwards, all these differences shall be taken away, and ye shall stand before God with naked consciences as others do. . . . If ye be not faithful ye shall appear before God, on that day, on worse terms than other men. . . . For the Magistracy, for a man to be taken up to the Throne of God (as in Authority a man is said to be), and yet at last to be regarded by God as an abominable branch, and be cast to the devil; and ye who have been God's great Instrument to save kingdoms, for you not to be saved yourselves; it would be sad to see men of mean estate, low and despicable condition, to enter into the Kingdom of God, and you, with all your honour and authority, shut out."

He was thanked for this Sermon on the evening of the same day, and there is prefixed to it in its published form—

"Die Mercurii, 31st Decr. 1645.

"Ordered by the Commons assembled in

Parliament that Mr. Wheeler, and Mr. Hill, do give thanks from this House to Mr. Strong, for the great paines he took in the Sermon he delivered this day, at the entreaty of this House, at St. Margaret's, Westminster: and to desire him to print his Sermon."

He also preached by Special Invitation at "Old St. Paul's" before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, on May 17, 1648, at a public Thanksgiving Service for the Victory of Colonel Horton's Forces over the Welsh, at St. Faggons, near Cardiff.

It is evident that his great gifts were early recognised, and he was soon called out into all the turmoil of the national life. He was therefore well known to the Abbey Church before being chosen as its Pastor. He was nominated for this position by the Governor of Westminster School to take Mr. Marshall's place, who acted either as a member of the Church or as a Representative of the Abbey Authorities. The same allowance was made to him as to his Presbyterian Predecessor; viz., £200 per annum, and a house. The deliberations of the Church Members were prob-

ably sanctified by much prayer, while seeking to be Divinely guided that their choice might accord with the appointment of Christ.

Mr. Strong was called to the Pastorate on December 6, 1650. This was "nearly two years after Charles's execution, and shortly before the commencement of Oliver's Protectorate." On that same Sunday he preached a Sermon from Col. ii. 5, on "Gospel Order, a Church's Beauty," in which he says: "As for matters of Faith it hath been the constant cause of my Ministry among you," implying that Minister and Members were already well known to each other. And further: "You are met here at this time for the Election of a Pastor; for no man is to take upon himself an Office in the Church but one that is set apart by God thereunto; and the way by which God doth set apart for this office is, by the election of the people, whose power or whose privilege it is to choose their own Officers that shall be over them." And "he that is chosen is to be looked upon as an Officer unto Christ, and to have his power from Christ."

He also delivered a discourse "at the Church's

choosing of Officers" from Heb. xiii. 17, on "Church Officers according to Institution," and closed by warning Deacons not to use their position "for their own honour and advantage, making Church power to serve their pride and lusts, which hath been the common abuse of it in all ages of the Church."

Dr. Henry Wilkinson, Dean of Christ Church, and Professor in Divinity for the Lady Margaret in the University of Oxford, said of him: "He made preaching his work, he was so much taken up in his work, that to my knowledge he was often in watchings a great part of the night, besides his pains in his daily studies." And he adds: "He came to be of very great note, and cried up beyond his Brethren by reason whereof, had not God given him much grace he might have been puffed up. . . . He was as happy in the purity and innocency of his life as he was for the power that through grace he acquired in his Ministry."

His hearers were some of the most notable men of the Commonwealth. Hostility to the Papacy, and opposition to Presbyterianism, caused many eminent persons to attend the

Abbey Services. The Lord Protector was sometimes to be seen among the worshippers. It does not appear that he was a Member of the Church. The conflicts in the nation often called him away to distant places. When in London he probably partook of the Lord's Supper at Whitehall, where the Rev. John Howe was his Chaplain.

A view of a State visit to the Abbey is given by Whitelock when Dr. Goodwin, President of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Founder of the Church now worshipping in the City Temple, officiated at the opening of Cromwell's first Parliament. He says that "His Highness alighted at the Abbey door; the Officers of the Army and the Gentlemen went first; next them four maces, then the Commissioners of the Seal; Whitelock carrying the purse; after, Lambert carrying the Sword bare; the rest followed. His Highness was seated over against the pulpit, the Members of Parliament on both sides." John Milton, his Secretary, was sometimes one of the Congregation, as were Pym and Elliot; Essex and Bradford, as well as many aristocratic Residents in Westminster.

Though the names of Church Members may not have been entered in the Abbey Archives, those which are on record show that the Church itself was most influential. Some of them were makers of history. Among these was John Bradshaw, of the Regicide Court. He was chosen by the Commissioners to its Presidency at a sitting in the Painted Chamber on January 10. Having been elected in his absence, he asked to be excused from presiding when the Court assembled on the 12th of the same month, but was prevailed upon to do so. Twenty Officers, or other Gentlemen, were appointed to attend his going to, and from, Westminster Hall. He was present every day until the King was condemned. As "Lord President" he signed the death warrant, and his seal was attached to his name among the fifty-eight signatures and seals appended to that momentous document.

After the King's execution the Episcopal Clergy said the Presbyterians brought him to the block, and the Independents beheaded him. But whatever attempts were made to apportion responsibility, Bradshaw accepted his full share of it. He was so convinced that Charles

Stuart deserved to die that he said among his last words, "If he had to be tried and condemned again, I would be the first man to do it."

Happily the terrible event did not cause estrangement between the leading Ministers of the two Denominations, who continued to occupy the Abbey pulpit. They were men whose names are inseparable from the Religious history of the Country, such as Owen and Howe, Baxter and Manton, Goodwin and Powell. Mr. Strong stood high in the esteem of the most eminent among them. He generally preached four times a week, sometimes oftener, and said that "one chief object of his study and prayer to God was that he might be led into all truth, and teach the same both seasonably and profitably."

At the time of Cromwell's dispute with Charles in Parliament there was another controversy very closely related to it. Archbishop Laud had been placing the Communion Table beneath the east windows in Churches so that Priests could officiate before it, and offer sacrifice upon it. The Puritans contended that Christians were "a Kingdom and priests unto

God," who were even enshrined within their own offerings, and could "present their bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable unto God." They affirmed that "the Table" is never spoken of as "an altar" in the Epistles, and that the distinction was most marked in the Apostolic Churches. The one belonged to Christianity, the other to Judaism. Self-indulgence once became associated with it at Corinth, but never Sacrifice. And yet making the Table into an Altar has been the cause of many angry controversies, and of most of the persecutions and martyrdoms. That which was intended to unite still divides Christendom. And yet a "Celebrant" has no right to stand between Communicants and Christ. The Epistle to the Hebrews excludes the Priest from the Church. He is nowhere recognised in the New Testament. The Priesthood of all Believers gives him no special position in the Kingdom of God.

It is interesting to learn on no less an authority than the late Dean Stanley that the Table at which the Independents gathered may now be seen in Henry VII's. Chapel. He told Dr. Stoughton that "it is said to be the

one which preceded the mixed stone and wood structure that preceded the present Communion Table; and if so, doubtless that which was used from the Reformation; and if so, that at which the Church of the Commonwealth communicated."

Sentiment lingers about it while thinking of the thousands who once sat round it in holy communion with their Risen Lord. The sacred utensils used could scarcely have been those once placed high up on the altar, and made conspicuous at the Sacrifice of the Mass. These would not have been adapted for Ministers handing to Communicants, and for passing on from one to another. Such as were suited for the simpler Service must have been specially provided by the Members of the Abbey Church. Were they brought away at the Ejection, then taken to St. Bartholomew's, and afterwards used at the Meeting-houses? Those plates were once handled by warriors who had grasped their swords, and wielded them while battling for their Country's freedom. And lips received wine from the Cups after quivering with emotion when praying in agony for

the Church's deliverance. As pure-minded Patriots they caught His Spirit, while partaking of the Symbols of His Sacrifice who gave His Life for saving the world. They "resisted even unto blood, striving against sin," and "presented their bodies as living Sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God."

There were some slight discussions among these saintly Communicants as to whether they ought to sit at, or about, the Table: but these had no Sacramentarian significance. They served to show that their consciences had rejected the Priestly system, and their anxiety to find out the exact Scripture Teaching concerning the Observance of the Lord's Supper.

As we have noted, several Tables used during the Commonwealth are preserved. Richard Baxter was occasionally the Preacher at the Abbey during that period. The heavy oak one around which he and his followers sat in the Chancel of the Church at Kidderminster can still be seen. One part of it is in "the Old Meeting-house" which they established, and the other in "the Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel." The slots have

been filled up in which irons were placed for fastening the two parts together. It was the Author's privilege, not only to be a Member of the Committee which erected the grand marble statue in "the Bull Ring," in honour of this great Puritan, and to take part in its unveiling by Dean Stanley, but also to trace the history of the latter half of this Table, and to enter it as a permanent record in the Church Book.

Dean Stanley's reference to the Pulpit at the Abbey is equally interesting. He says that during the Commonwealth "it was not where it at present stands, but in the south side of the choir, or immediately beside it, having against the wall the portrait of Richard II., now in the Jerusalem Chamber, over what was then the Lord Chancellor's pew."

It is probable that its noble Occupant, Mr. Strong, found the demands of his conspicuous position most exacting; and that these, combined with unceasing devotion to his Ministry in such anxious days, hastened his end. He died in early life, in the month of June, 1654.

The Rev. Obadiah Sedgwick, B.D., delivered his Funeral Sermon from the words, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof" (2 Kings ii. 12). In speaking of him, he said: "He was so plain in heart, so deep in judgment, so frequent, so exact, and laborious in preaching, and in a word so eminently qualified for all the Duties of the Ministerial Office that he did not know his equal." He compared him to Elijah for his zeal in life and rapture in death.

The loss of such a Pastor must have seemed irreparable, and the sorrow caused was widespread. In "The Epistle Dedicatory" Mr. Sedgwick said: "I never preached a sermon (in this kind) with more grief of heart, and never did I discern a Sermon heard, and attended, with more weeping eyes. Certainly God had given in unto him the affections of many persons, who loved him in his life, and bitterly lamented him at his death."

The Discourse was "Dedicated to the Right Worshipful Colonel Boswell, Henry Scobel Esq.; and to all the rest of the Congregation lately pertaining unto the care

of that Faithful Pastor, Mr. William Strong, Preacher of the Gospel at Westminster Abbey."

The Rev. George Griffith said: "God appointed him to labour in those places where all his abilities might be exercised, and shine forth in all their lustre." In his Preface to Mr. Strong's Sermons entitled "The Heavenly Treasure" he adds: "Neither the flatteries, nor the frowns of men, could hinder him from his beloved exercise." . . . "While he laboured more to profit than to please, he never failed to please as well as profit those who heard him." "Being filled with the Spirit, he was enabled to do much work in a little time." He urged Professors, in spite of their differences, "to maintain good works, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness."

Dr. Thomas Manton styled him, "An Eminent and Faithful Servant of God; a man eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures; and a burning and Shining Light in the Church of Christ." He also refers to him as that "Godly, Able, and Faithful Minister of Christ of the Abbey at Westminster."

It is said that Mr. Strong used to walk

backward and forward in the Triforium while preparing his sermons, and before preaching them. There is in consequence a tradition that his ghost still haunts the Building. When Dean Stanley was arranging for the obsequies of Dr. Livingstone he sought to secure a fitting Representation of Nonconformity for the occasion. Some Students from Cheshunt College were invited to attend, and when they had assembled at the Deanery the Dean told them the story about Mr. Strong's ghost haunting the Abbey, and asked if they could wield the power to exorcise him.

But if his ghost lingers there, his body was cast out. The immoral Charles II., after he came to the throne, was careful to have his own illegitimate children buried in its consecrated soil. This is distinctly stated by the Dean in his delightful book, "The Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey." But the Royal libertine sanctioned an order from the Privy Council for disinterring the bodies of some of the noblest men and women of the nation.

Among those thus dishonoured was Crom-

well's mother, who died at the age of ninety-four years. She was the Daughter of Sir Richard Steward of Ely. His own Daughter who bare her Mother's name of Elizabeth, and had married Sir John Claypole, of Norfolk, seemed to have escaped such an indignity. She had often pleaded with her Father on behalf of imprisoned "Royalists," and this may have been the reason why her body was undisturbed, and lies in the Abbey to-day. She passed away in her Father's presence in one of the Chambers of Wolsey's palace at Hampton Court on August 6, 1658; and he attended her burial on the 10th of that month. Her death is supposed to have hastened his end. Belonging to the Naval Service, the corpses of Admiral Blake, the Founder of the British Navy, and of Admirals Edward Popham and Richard Dean, were also thrown out.

Of those once in the Army there were the bones of Colonels Sir William Constable, Humphrey Muckworth, and John Mildrum; among civilians the bodies of John Pym and William Stroud, Members of Parliament, were thus degraded; also that of Dr. Isaac

Dorislaus, who was murdered at the Hague by twelve English "Cavaliers." They stabbed him while at supper and cut his throat. He was there as Public Minister for Parliament. The remains of Thomas May, the historian, and of Dennis Bond, received similar treatment.

Connected with the Church there were the bodies of Stephen Gardiner, Presbyterian Divine, and of Dr. William Twisse, President of the Westminster Assembly. He has been made familiar to us by the well-known picture of J. R. Herbert, Esq., R.A., which represents him, confronted by Philip Nye, making his famous speech against Presbytery, and asserting Liberty of Conscience.

The remains of more than a hundred noble women, who had adorned Society, and of honourable men who were eminent in the State, were taken from their resting-places in the Abbey on September 12 and 14, 1661, and cast into a pit which had been dug near the back door of one of the Prebendaries in St. Margaret's Churchyard. Many others would have been thus maltreated but for the protests of an indignant public, and the odium which such acts brought upon Parliament.

The interest in these bodies is increased because they were laid to rest in the Abbey during the ten years in which the Independents were worshipping there; and Church members would often be in attendance at the interments, and join the simple Services conducted by their Ministers. The first of these Ministers, the Rev. William Strong, was buried in the south transept on July 4, 1654, near to his Presbyterian predecessor, in the presence of large numbers of his Church and Congregation.

Why his remains should have been outraged there is no evidence to show. Prejudice is always unreasoning, and often incites to passion such as carries men into extremes of action. The renowned Independent Minister, the Rev. Hugh Peters, was condemned to death simply because he had preached before General Monk and his Soldiers in St. Albans Abbey. He was also compelled to witness the execution of Mr. Cook, the former Solicitor-General, and the quartering of his body, though he avowed to the last that he had nothing whatever to do with the death of the King. He was hanged

at Charing Cross, and his head was set up on a pole upon London Bridge.

In like manner there is not the slightest evidence to show that Mr. Strong was in any way associated with the Regicides. He was not called to the Abbey Pastorate until two years after the King had been executed, and there is nothing to prove that he ever preached in defence of them. It was perhaps sufficient that some of Charles's Judges belonged to his Church, and that Cromwell occasionally attended the Services he conducted. His mere connection with these anti-royalists would be sufficient to insure Mr. Strong's condemnation. Hence the body of this devoted Minister shared the terrible indignities described. The memories of his noble services to Church and State were not respected; though Mr. Theophilus Gale spoke of him as "a star of the first magnitude in the Right Hand of Christ, for revealing the resplendent Light of the Gospel."

V

THE CHURCH'S SECOND CHOICE

IT must have caused much anxiety to those belonging to the Abbey Church when their first Minister died. They would feel concerned as to who should be the successor of one who proved so eminent, and was so greatly beloved. At the time of Rev. William Strong's appointment, in conjunction with the Abbey Authorities, he laid down the principles by which the election of Ministers and Deacons should be carried out. The Church could not, all at once, free itself from the trammels of Officialism around it. It was worshipping in a grand National Building.

When its second Pastor was elected the procedure was more thoroughly in accordance with Congregational principles. The Puritan Independency of its members had freer and

fuller expression. Their Minister was not appointed by State Officials, nor by wealthy Patrons. Neither was there anything like competition for the premier pulpit. Their supreme desire was to know only the Will of Christ. And the one man whom He had chosen seemed to stand out distinctly before them, and they called him to become their Spiritual Teacher and Leader.

The Rev. John Rowe, M.A., was appointed as Second Pastor during the same year in which the first one died. This fact indicates the unanimity existing among the Members, and their confidence as to being Divinely directed to him. His father was born at Shobrook, in Devonshire, and educated at the Grammar School at Crediton, where he became proficient in Greek and Latin. He was studying for the University, with a view to the Christian Ministry; but in consequence of his own father's death his course in life was diverted. He then removed to Crediton in order that he and his family might enjoy the ministrations of an able preacher there. Such was the value he attached to the House of God.

His social life appears to have been most elevated in tone and character. He often prepared by early research and prayer for conducting Family Worship every morning. Each member of his household read the Scriptures verse by verse, and was catechised by him. He gave them the results of his own study of Godly Divines and of the Bible. This manner of holding Service in the home was continued for some twenty or thirty years. Though a Calvinist his sympathies were comprehensive, and in those days of national anxiety he frequently exhorted others to pray for the Episcopal Church.

On Sunday mornings prayers with the family were abbreviated, in order that its members might be punctual at Public Worship. He used to say that "it was more fit that they should wait for the Minister than that the Minister should wait for them." He urged the importance of their being able to say with Cornelius, "Now, therefore, we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

He earnestly believed in the value of private and public devotion. He said: "It was the

observation of an excellent man that when he did hasten over holy duties, out of an over eager desire to follow his worldly business, he did many times meet with his cross in his business; but when he did take the ordinary time God did make his other business to succeed the better; or else his mind was brought to submit to the Will of God."

He also said: "When I met a Sermon that did not like me, I first looked into myself to see if there were nothing amiss there, and if there be no fault there I would then scan it over again. We many times blame the Minister when the fault is our own; we have not prayed for him as we should have done."

Though prevented from entering the Ministry himself he was most interested in those who were preparing to do so. He spent part of his income to support Students at the University, and for the maintenance of worthy Pastors. The Rev. Theophilus Gale, in a preface to an account of Mr. Rowe's "Life and Death," says that he was stating in public what he had often affirmed in private, that he verily believed Mr. Rowe "enjoyed more of God in his Civil employments than many

Christians did in their Spiritual retirements and Devotion." Mr. Gale adds he could not "but admire the Grace of God that shone so illustriously in this eminent Saint." He speaks of Crediton as honoured "on account of Mr. Rowe having lived and died there."

His piety was of a cheerful and hopeful character. A friend who visited him during his last illness said "that the bodies of Saints would rest in their graves as in a bed of doom"; to which Mr. Rowe replied, "Yea, but this day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." He died with clasped hands, and uplifted eyes, and saying, "Lord! Jesus, receive my spirit." He passed away on February 11, 1660.

In those days sombre views of death were cherished, and sorrow of heart was shown by many signs of mourning. When the remains of departed friends were carried out to burial gloomy pageants were thought necessary, with hired mourners as attendants. Such were the customs of those olden times. But Mr. Rowe showed that he was an enlightened Christian, and on leaving some final instructions to his family he stated in writing that

"he would have no *blacks* worn for him at his *funeral*."

This holy man was the Father of the second Abbey Church Pastor! And such was the family of which the son was so distinguished a member! He was sent to Oxford at sixteen years of age, and became a Fellow of Emmanuel College. When the city was besieged and taken, parents seemed unwilling that their sons should remain in a place which was as much like a Camp as a University. After being captured it was garrisoned, and when safety was secured some who had fled returned. Mr. Rowe went back, and having taken his degree in the year 1648, he was made a Fellow of Corpus Christi College. He then served in the Gospel at Whitney, and afterwards settled at Crediton. While there he was made member of a Commission for ejecting ignorant and incapable Ministers from the Churches in Devonshire.

The meeting called for appointing Mr. Rowe to the Pastorate at the Abbey was probably held in the Jerusalem Chamber, and there can be little question as to who presided over it. Its members were not left without

guidance during the vacancy, and Calamy says they were "persons of better judgment than to choose a novice or a man of noise and words for their pastor." Having chosen The Rev. Seth Wood, M.A., to assist their former Minister, he continued to enjoy their confidence, and was well known to them. He is spoken of as "an ingenious Scholar, and an eloquent, awakening preacher." In the interval there was evidently no striving after the supreme position for himself. Having kept the Church united, he would wisely direct its deliberations and counsel its members as to their choice. When his colleague was appointed, and entered upon his duties, he doubtless gave him precedence, and earnestly co-operated with him.

About this time Mr. Rowe's ability and character were fully recognised, as well as his position, for he was forthwith called into further service among the Churches. On September 2, 1654, an Act was passed, "Touching Ministers Sequestered for Delinquency, seeking Approbation." It appears that some of these had "illegally gained possession of positions from which they had been

ejected." Others were "seeking to secure public maintenance without giving satisfactory evidence of fitness."

The Rev. John Rowe was the first of five who were added to the Commissioners to investigate, and report upon, all such cases. His name also appears appended to important documents with those of the most eminent men of the period. He was, therefore, fully accredited before he was invited to the Church at Westminster.

While he was Pastor there the Rev. John Howe was Chaplain at Whitehall, who showed himself so broad in his sympathies that whenever he met Royalists and Episcopalians who were worthy men, but not fully equipped for Ministerial Service, he sought to help them through the hands of the "Triers." The aim of this Body was to purify the Ministry and promote the interests of Religion. One of the chief questions asked of each applicant was if he "ever had any experience of a work of grace upon the heart."

Mr. Rowe came from the same county as John Howe. A word portraiture of him has

reached us from the Rev. Samuel Lee, M.A., who became his Assistant after he left the Abbey, and Editor of his published discourses. He says: "His stature inclined to tallness; his visage affable, and somewhat smiling; his gestures grave and decent; his behaviour meek and courteous; and what is very observable, and much to be imitated, he meddled with his own business; not interposing, much less imposing on other Churches; being averse to ostentation, and public appearance. Of a quiet spirit, and replenished with the desires of Heaven; as 'tis observed by Naturalists that the dew never falls in a stormy or a cloudy night."

In addition to what was outwardly noticeable in Mr. Rowe his colleague adds: "If the Anatomist cannot unwind the texture of the brain of an ant, or discover the wisdom of that minute insect, how much less can any unravel the mysteries of the Being of the Eternal God, 'whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain'!" He then speaks of Mr. Rowe as carrying his researches so far as to cause him to burn the wings of his soul against the rays of that inaccessible light which streams

from the glory of Him before whom even the Seraphim can only cry, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord God of Hosts."

Dr. Calamy refers to him as "a man of great gravity in conversation, of strict piety, of diligent researches into the mysteries of Religion; not contenting himself with superficial notions, but chiefly commanding such as tended to practice."

It seems, on one occasion, as if the Authorities sought to compel some to come within his influence, who otherwise would scarcely have attended his ministry. On Sunday, February 22, 1657, several Quakers, who were brought from Bristol as prisoners under custody of the Serjeant-at-Arms, went to the Abbey morning and afternoon, and "gave ear civilly and attentively to the sermons of Mr. John Rowe, an eminent preacher." At first they may have gone by constraint, but afterwards willingly. It is added that they were so far wrought upon by his spiritual doctrine that they intended to hear him again, when it was hoped "they may be rectified in their judgment."

Many well-known men of other persuasions

joined his Church, even leaders from among the Quakers. President Bradshaw continued in membership during Mr. Rowe's Pastorate. He died of ague on November 22, 1659, and the Pastor preached his Funeral Sermon. The following were also in its Fellowship: two Judges of the Regicide Court; Major Goffe, a personal friend of Cromwell's; Colonel Whalley, the major's father-in-law; several of the Protector's Lords; many members of the Long Parliament, which was spoken of as "a Godly Parliament," and numbers of the Gentry.

In this connection the following transfer is specially interesting, and still further shows the relations of Army Officers to Independency. The Christians sending it were meeting in one of the largest Parish Churches in the country, and those receiving it were assembling in the noblest Ecclesiastical building of the Metropolis. As fellow-Christians they were evidently conducting their Church affairs in the strictest Congregational Order. In the Great Yarmouth Minute Book we read: "The Church met according to the former Order." "On

30th November, 1658, the Church dismissed Lieutenant Colonel Clement Keen to the Church of Christ at Westminster, whereof Mr. Rowe is Pastor." And the compiler of the Minutes speaks of Mr. Rowe as having succeeded Mr. Strong, and of being a Non-conformist, and a Congregationalist, as Pastor of a separate Church at the Abbey.

In addition to his exalted position as a Minister, Mr. Rowe also came into historic prominence. He was called to preach before Parliament on a Public Thanksgiving Day for victory over the Spanish Fleet, on October 8, 1656. His text was Matt. xvi. 24, 25, and the subject of his Sermon: "Man's Duty in magnifying God's Work."

The greatest event that occurred during his Ministry in the Abbey, and the most momentous for his Church, was the death of Oliver Cromwell. There had been many plots to assassinate the Protector, and his life was often imperilled on the battle-field, and yet he died a natural death. When his departure seemed inevitable, many earnest, anxious, prayers were offered up in places of worship for his recovery all over the country.

Such was the estimate of the value of his life that when an attempt had failed to murder him on his way to Hampton Court, and also to fire Whitehall, Parliament appointed a Day of Public Thanksgiving for his escape. Lord Falconberg, writing to Henry Cromwell, said: "The consternation and astonishment of all people are inexpressible, their hearts seem as if sunk within them." Many well-known men then spoke out their gravest fears for the welfare of the nation. Major-General Goffe, who, as we have seen, was a member of Mr. Rowe's Church, stood by the Protector's bedside at Whitehall until he died. John Howe, his Chaplain, remained there in anxious suspense, and doubtless in prayerful solicitude. On Monday, August 30, 1658, "there roared and howled, all day and night, a mighty storm of wind," and Oliver was overheard praying: "Give them one heart, and mutual love, and go on to deliver them, and make the name of Christ glorious in the World." He passed away on the Anniversary of two of his most famous victories, Dunbar and Worcester, September 3, 1658, about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, aged 59 years.

His body is said to have laid in State at Somerset House, and from thence was conveyed to the Abbey on November 9th. The public ceremonial was deferred until the 20th of that month. There was a great Military Pageant, which cost some £150,000. The corpse was taken from the chariot by ten Gentlemen, and is supposed to have been deposited privately in a vault in King Henry VII.'s Chapel, some time before that ceremonial. "Most of the Sovereigns of Europe went into mourning, and even Louis XIV. shewed this outward sign of respect." The funeral was probably the grandest ever witnessed in England. It appears that his body was really buried in the Abbey on November 23rd. A fine Mausoleum was erected for receiving it, on which his effigy was placed, for the view of all spectators.

John Milton, his Secretary, John Owen, his Confidant, and John Howe, his Chaplain, were most likely in attendance as mourners. John Rowe, as Pastor of the Abbey Church, must also have been present, full of misgiving as to the future. There probably was no

"Committal Service." Its absence would be in accord with the feelings of the more rigid Puritans, who had a strong dislike to formal "Religious Observances" on great public occasions.

The Royalists who then came again into power were swift to punish those who had been the cause of Charles I's. death. Twenty of their number fled from the country, and twenty-five were imprisoned for life. Twelve were executed for high treason, including Hugh Peter and Sir Henry Vane.

But while the living were punished the dead were not left unmolested. A Bill was passed in the House of Commons in November, 1660, without opposition, that the bodies of the "Regicides" were to be taken out of their graves, and after being hanged were to be buried beneath the gallows. Even Pepys deplored such a decision, and many others denounced it. Nevertheless, the same rancour which had cast out Wycliffe's bones from the Chancel of Lutterworth Church, and ordered them to be burned, and then caused the ashes to be cast into the River Swift, which carried them away into the sea—that

same spirit which, according to Carlyle, had exhumed more than a hundred bodies from the Abbey, and buried them amid the greatest indecencies, also disinterred the remains of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton. These were then drawn on a sledge to Tyburn, and there hung up until sunset. After these indignities "the common hangman took their heads, placed them on poles, and set them on the top of Westminster Hall; Ireton's and Cromwell's being on either side, with Bradshaw's in the middle." A tradition says that Lady Mary Falconberg was able, by bribery, to get the Protector's mutilated corpse removed; and many believe it now rests within a huge mass of masonry in Mexborough Castle in Yorkshire.

Her Ladyship was Cromwell's third daughter. She was a woman of great beauty and of resolute spirit, and became the wife of Thomas, Lord Viscount Falconberg. Bishop Burnet styles her "a wise and worthy woman"; and says "she was more likely to have maintained the post of Protector than either of her Brothers," according to the saying which went with her, "That those who

wore breeches deserved petticoats better, but if those in petticoats had been in breeches they would have held faster." Her lineal descendant has more than once been importuned to put the tradition to a practical test, but has always refused, saying, "If my ancestor is there, he shall rest undisturbed for my time."

The great Protector's head remained exposed for many years over Westminster Hall. His skull was thought to be in the custody of a gentleman in Kent, and the Dean of Westminster has recently investigated the claims made, with a view to getting it restored to its original resting-place, but was not satisfied as to its identity. Though his remains were scattered, busts, statues, and portraits of him have been multiplying all over the country. They are now so numerous that it would be almost as impossible to remove him from the public gaze as to efface his name from literature and history. He stands forth far more illustriously than most of the Kings. His character was too long misjudged in consequence of being viewed through the misleading accounts of the Restoration.

Milton, however, in his Sonnet styled him "Our Chief of Men," and spoke of him as having "fought God's battles, and His work pursued." It is now coming to be recognised that he put those who were ablest and most conscientious into public positions, and capable and high-minded patriots in the Army and Navy. He also placed the holiest and sincerely devoted Ministers in the Church. Though not unwilling to become King, he ultimately declined the overtures made to him by Parliament about ascending the Throne. It was then decided that he should continue to be entitled Lord Protector."

From *The British Quarterly Review* of 1846, it is evident that Dr. Robert Vaughan, Principal of Lancashire Independent College, first gave him his rightful position in the History of the British Nation. Having carried on his researches for many years at the Record Office, he published the results in his "Memorials of the Stuart Dynasty" (1831), also in "The Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell" (1838), and "History of England under the House of Stuarts" (1840), long before "the Sage of Chelsea" had any

acquaintance with the subject. The same view of his character and career given by Carlyle in his "Life and Letters of Oliver Cromwell," which did not appear until 1845, was presented throughout all five of Dr. Vaughan's volumes.

It is due to Dr. Vaughan that this claim should be reiterated, and necessary in order to show that the Independents have not failed to vindicate Cromwell's consistency and the grand patriotic work he accomplished. Carlyle's assertion that he was "the first actual reader of the speeches of Cromwell for nearly two centuries" cannot be justified, as any candid student of Dr. Vaughan's scholarly works will see for himself. The honour of clearing up what was mysterious in the Protector's career was not left to Carlyle. His claim to precedence is not substantiated, nor can the spirit in which it was made be commended.

The work done by Dr. Robert Vaughan, relating to Cromwell and the Commonwealth, called forth the approval of Earl Spencer, "a Nobleman whose acquaintance with that period of our history was known

to have been singularly accurate and comprehensive." But though Carlyle cannot retain the priority accorded to him, there can be no question as to the importance of the service he rendered in setting forth the Majesty of the great Protector's character and the mightiness of his deeds. And when these are more fully recognised further restitution will be made for the wrongs done to his memory. The people may yet erect one of the grandest Monuments to his honour in Westminster Abbey, as England's greatest benefactor.

The rule of Richard, his son, lasted only eight months. His Government summoned a Parliament which met on January 27, 1659, and on February 4th following Dr. John Owen preached before its Members at a private fast. The new Ruler was not the weakling generally supposed. John Howe said with some warmth: "How could he be a weakling when, upon the 'Remonstrance that was brought by the Army by his Brother Fleetwood, he stood it out all night against his whole Council, and continued the debate until 4 o'clock in

the morning, having none to abet him but Thurloe; maintaining that dissolving the Parliament would be to his and to their ruin." Thurloe had been the great Protector's Secretary, and said when he died: "This stroke is so sore and unexpected; I can do nothing but put my mouth in the dust, and say, 'It is the Lord.'"

Dr. Isaac Watts shared John Howe's views concerning Richard Cromwell, and was confirmed in them after several conversations with him. But though endowed with gifts, and strength, and much goodness of heart, he proved unequal to holding the reins he had taken from his father's hands for governing the nation's affairs. To say that he had not the conspicuous abilities, the strong initiative, and indomitable courage of the Illustrious Protector is only to say what is generally observable, that distinguished fathers rarely have equally eminent Sons. He was a good man, benevolent, devout; and a true Servant of God. John Howe remained as his chaplain and visited him until his death.

But while the Independents deplored the prospect of the Old Royalist Episcopalians

returning with the Restoration of Monarchy, they seemed unable to prevent it. The change was favoured by the Presbyterians, and the Papists had sufficient reasons for believing Charles would support their Cause. In his Declaration from Breda, on April 14th, he said: "We do declare a liberty to tender consciences, and that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences in matters of Religion, which do not disturb the peace of the Kingdom; and we shall be ready to consent to such an 'Act of Parliament' as upon mature deliberation shall be offered to us for the full granting that Indulgence."

Charles was proclaimed King on May 3, 1660, and with his Retinue landed at Dover on the 26th of that month. On the 29th following he made his memorable journey to London. The Rev. Dr. Calamy, Dr. Manton, and Mr. Bowles were appointed by Parliament, and the Civic Authorities, to attend him. Mr. Arthur Jackson presented him with a richly bound Bible. On taking it he said that "it should be the rule of his government, and of his Life." People were shout-

ing, cannons roaring, bells ringing, and bonfires blazing, everywhere. On April 23, 1661, he was crowned, amid the wildest enthusiasm, in Westminster Abbey.

In his Speech before both Houses of Parliament on Monday, February 10, 1667, he said: "One thing more I hold myself obliged to recommend to you at this present, which is, that you would seriously think of some course to beget a better union and composure in the minds of my Protestant Subjects, in matters of Religion, whereby they may be induced, not only to submit quietly to the Government, but also cheerfully give their diligence to the support of it."

The insincerity of the King, however, can be judged by his conduct, and his Court. Pepys says that he laughed in Whitehall Chapel because the Anthem was "ill sung"; and declares that he saw the Duke of York, afterwards James II., and my Lady Castlemaine, "talk to one another very wantonly" between the curtains dividing them; also that on Christmas Day, when Bishop Morley, in "a poor Sermon, but long," reprehended "the common jollity of the Court," saying that

"true joy" ought to be felt on such days . . . "they all laughed in the Chapel when he reflected on their ill actions and courses."

A similar hypocrisy was shown by Charles at his death. The Archbishop of Canterbury and three Prelates were in attendance, and Thomas Ken, Bishop of Bath and Wells (author of the Evening Hymn), hoped to secure some expressions of contrition. Bread and wine were near the bed for administering the "Last Sacrament." But Father Huddlestone had been secretly admitted by means of a back staircase; and having performed the Offices for the dying, Charles II. departed as an avowed member of the Romish Church.

Soon after he had begun to reign he usurped "the Crown Rights" of Him Whose "Kingdom is not of this world." "The leading members of the Presbyterian and Dissenting Bodies were offered large preferment in the Church as the price of their conformity, but they refused." Then, as Wilson says, "it was safer to be a felon than a Nonconformist." The consequences to Mr. Rowe and his flock were such as occurred in thousands of Parish Churches, and several Cathedrals, throughout

the country. Beloved Pastors and People were scattered, never to meet again in this world.

The most noticeable among these ejections must have been at Westminster Abbey. Did Mr. Rowe preach a "Farewell Sermon," like many of the Ministers, suitable to the sad occasion? Such troublous times scarcely admitted of his last discourse being published, and the Preacher would be too anxiously engrossed to prepare it for "the Press." From his known character he would probably show a quiet dignity, rather than utter righteous protestations, or address pathetic appeals to the people.

Pepys says in his "Diary" that on July 1, 1660, he went to the Abbey, and heard a good Sermon from a Stranger; but adds, "There was no Common Prayer yet"; hence the pulpit must have been occupied by a Nonconformist.

Then on September 23rd he attended the Service expecting to "hear Mr. Baxter's or Mr. Rowe's 'Farewell Sermon.'" He says he "sat in Mr. Symond's pew, and heard Mr. Rowe." Why he thought Richard Baxter

should occupy the pulpit for the last time needs to be explained, especially as he was not Pastor there. He had been prominent among the notable Preachers occasionally heard in the Abbey, and evidently enjoyed the friendship and esteem of its stated Minister. Having declined the Bishopric of Hereford, offered him by Lord Chancellor Clarendon, and not being allowed to resume his duties at Kidderminster, he became "Minister at large," serving most frequently at St. Dunstan's in the West, for Dr. Bates. He officiated there by the sanction of Bishop Sheldon, on the condition that he did not assail the doctrines or ceremonies of the Church. He had to avoid controversy, and content himself with preaching the Gospel.

As he was thus "without Pastoral charge" it was expected he would preach his farewell to "the Establishment," and that no place could be more fitting for doing so than the Abbey. But he did not withdraw from it either at the Restoration or between this and the Ejection. He showed a qualified acknowledgment of Prelacy, which had risen into the ascendant between the one and the other,

hoping against hope that some scheme of comprehension, such as he sought to secure throughout his strenuous life, might ultimately be formulated and adopted. But when a crisis was inevitable, and he saw St. Bartholomew's day approaching, there was no hesitation as to the duty of decisive action. He resolutely sacrificed everything, and launched upon an anxious and troublous future, trusting to Divine support and protection. He preached his "Farewell Sermon" at Blackfriars as early as May, 1662.

But though Richard Baxter's pathetic and powerful deliverance was not heard in the Abbey, Pepys listened to Pastor Rowe. He tells us nothing about the scene or the sermon. His were simply jottings in a "Diary," and not notes by a Reporter for the "Press." He was present as a curious observer of events, which meant much to the Church and the Nation he failed to see. A faithful Minister's last message to a Congregation often causes great sorrow. But for Mr. Rowe to be driven from among his beloved flock, with no prospect of return to the Abbey, must have been painfully solemn and soul-

stirring. Pepys, however, was not likely to feel much sympathy for those who were suffering for conscience sake. He was a man who took care of himself, and found great satisfaction in doing so; and would be little impressed by vital changes which were so distressful to others, and whose consequences stand out in such instructive relief from the histories of those anxious times.

In his case frivolity was evidently added to curiosity. There appears to have been "a Reader," other than Mr. Rowe, conducting the Service before the Sermon, and Pepys says: "I laughed at him" because "in his prayer he desired of God that He would imprint His words on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the great toes of their right feet." Now "an uncouth and unseemly phraseology was the vice of that period, not of the men." The good man simply wished that the Divine word might be prominent and manifest in all their action and progress.

Then Pepys became most uncomfortable while listening to the Sermon. Some plaster fell from the top of the Abbey that made him, and all the rest in the pew, afraid and

he wished himself out. He does not say if he heard Mr. Rowe's *farewell* Sermon.

On his next visit the expected change had taken place. He tells us that on October 2nd he went "to see them at Vespers," and "found but a thin Congregation." He attended again on the 4th of that month, and saw Dr. Frewin translated to the Archbishopric of York, and a number of Bishops in their habits in Henry VII.'s Chapel. The sight of these seems to have considerably amused him, for he exclaims: "But Lord! at their going out how the people did look again at them, as strange creatures, and few with any kind of love, or respect."

Evidently, the change was not a welcome one. He says that on the 7th day of the same month, after dinner, he walked once more to the Abbey, and heard them "read the Church Service, but very ridiculously." Then he adds: "A poor, cold Sermon was delivered by Dr. Lamb, one of the Prebendaries, and so all ended."

On November 4th he attended morning Service at his "own Church, where Dr. Mills did begin to nibble at the Common Prayer."

After dinner he went to the Abbey, where he heard organs in Services for the first time. On that occasion he was apparently more engaged in admiring his wife than absorbed in worship; for he says, "My wife seemed very pretty to-day, it being the first time I had ever given her leave to wear a black patch."

A subsequent Writer took the presence of the Puritans much more seriously. The animus in his comments is also amusing. In "Westmonasterium," or, "The History and Antiquities of the Abbey Church of St. Peter's, Westminster," published in 1723, Mr. John Dart, the Author, says: "The Church was used in common, there being a morning and afternoon Lecturer appointed to preach here; and here the Parliament resorted on their Fasts, when they sought the Lord concerning mischief, and praised Him for their success in it, while the Preachers insulted the ashes of their dead Monarchs, and spirited them to destroy their living Sovereign; and during these miserable times of rebellion under the Parliament, and afterwards under *Cromwell*, the pulpit here was continually filled with the grave hypocrisy of the first

Preachers, and the mad and blasphemous extravagance of the latter."

"After the King's murder the Parricides, as a Reward, bestowed the Deanery House on *Bradshaw*, their President, and whence his carcass was brought, and buried in this Church, as were likewise those of Cromwell, &c., deposited; but upon the happy Restauration, that of Episcopacy attended it, and the place recovered her former glory."

These interesting extracts give us a vivid insight into the changes, which were serious enough to the Independents. No provision was made for their Ministers such as they had helped to secure for the Clergy. The last Service which the Pastor conducted among his people, in their grand spiritual house, must have been sorrowful and anxious. The Church Members were going forth they knew not whither; but their nobility of soul came into honourable relief throughout their after-history. They showed an unshaken self-reliance and an unceasing trust in Christ. The power that drove them from the Abbey continued to persecute them, but failed to break up their fellowship. They still strove to mould the

Community rather than to be moulded by it. The invincible courage of some of the Commonwealth Ministers, among whom Mr. Rowe was pre-eminent, was worthy of the old Hebrew Prophets. Their Names deserve to be added to a Christian muster-roll, which might be appended to the list of Jewish Heroes in the Epistle to the Hebrews. In service and in suffering they proved to be "men of whom the world was not worthy." They "subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight armies of aliens."

VI

LIFE'S TRAGEDIES

THE district into which the Rev. John Rowe led the Members of the Abbey Church was very different to that of Westminster. They wandered about in Holborn some time before finding a home in Smithfield, and in both places had to suffer much persecution. The one name was derived from "*old bourne*," and the other from "*Smaed-feld*," or, smooth field; though some contend that it is traceable to the smiths' forges which were so numerous in connection with its horse fairs. Both names bespeak the character of the neighbourhood. Stow, in his "Survey," published in the year 1598, spoke of it as "a moorish ground," and refers to "a horse pool" which was "a great water" that turned a mill wheel. The land

was divided into the inner and outer moors, and stretched away in one dead level as far as Moor-fields and Fen-Church Street, the prefixes "*moor*" and "*fen*" being suggestive of moisture and malaria.

The local conditions appear to have been insanitary in the extreme. Foxe speaks of that part as "a laystall of all ordure and filth; and the place where felons and other transgressors of the King's Laws were put into execution." Stow also says that offal and rubbish were constantly carted there from the City.

This was the spot Rahere chose for founding the Priory Church. He had been a King's Jester, and was renowned for his "wit, humour, and minstrelsy"; being a welcome companion of nobles, and a guest at King Henry's Court. Having made a pilgrimage to Rome, he contracted malarial fever in the Campagna. On his way home he suffered a relapse, and is said to have had a vision of St. Bartholomew. It may be that in the delirium which accompanied it some picture of this Saint, whose shrine he had visited while in the Holy City, engrossed his

mind; when to the Saint himself he vowed that if restored he would build a Church.

Whatever the nature of his experience, there can be no doubt about his interpretation of it and its effect upon his life. It was the means of changing the man, and of inciting him to expend the energies of brain and heart in religious work and practical benevolence.

It must not be supposed that Rahere erected the colossal buildings in Smithfield at his own expense. But a clear view of what might be accomplished enabled him to enkindle something of his own enthusiasm in others, and to insure their co-operation for the accomplishment of his great life purpose. His Church, which is of pure Norman Architecture, was projected in the year 1103, and partly built in 1123. The Choir was then consecrated by Richard de Beauvais, and the whole finished in 1133. Rahere himself became the first Prior, and held Office for more than twenty-two years.

It was, therefore, fitting that his body should rest in some worthy monument within its walls. His tomb is an elegant specimen

of the pointed style of Architecture, having "a very highly wrought stone screen on which his effigy extends at full length." Some years since a workman struck his pickaxe into the stone-work at the back of it, and a sandal was taken from one of the dead Prior's feet, which can now be seen in a glass case in the North Ambulatory of the Church.

The tomb itself "is richly painted as well as sculptured, and shews the black robes of Rahere, and of the Monks kneeling by his side. Each of the latter has a Bible before him open at 51st Chapter of Isaiah," and no words could be more suggestive of the work Rahere sought to accomplish in that district: "The Lord shall comfort Zion; He will comfort her waste places, and He will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein; thanksgiving, and the voice of melody."

Much superstition, however, remained among the people of that swampy neighbourhood long after St. Bartholomew's Church was founded. In the year 1523 some of

the vagabond Astrologers who abounded prophesied that the Thames would overflow, and sweep away 10,000 houses. This prediction was so often repeated, that it came to be believed. Multitudes packed up their goods and chattels, and removed into the home counties. Wealthy citizens also sought their safety in flight. Even the working classes fled with their wives and families, and it is estimated that some twenty thousand people left their deserted dwellings to be swept away by the coming floods. Crowds were to be seen encamped on all the elevated spots around the Metropolis.

It is surprising that Prior Bolton should have been influenced by such ignorant interpreters of "conjunctions and prognostications." He shared the general fears, and having a parsonage at Harrow-on-the-Hill, he and his Brethren of the Monastery sought shelter there. He stored it with provisions for two months, secured some boats, and hired expert rowers in case their services should be required. Many wealthy citizens prayed that they might share the safety of his retreat, but were told there was scarcely

room enough for the officials of his Church and himself. The excited crowds anxiously watched the sun rise on the day when they expected the floods, but the tide in the river simply ebbed and flowed as before. Then some proposed that the false prophets should be ducked in the water, and a mob went forth in search of them. When found they had the audacity to say that the stars were right, but that their interpretation was wrong. They had miscalculated by one figure. A five had been read instead of a six, and the disaster would certainly occur a century hence. This subterfuge allayed the fears and appeased the wrath of the populace. The people went back to their homes, and Prior Bolton returned with his Brethren to St. Bartholomew's in Smithfield.

It is evident that Rahere was concerned for the health of the people, and cared for the body as well as the soul. He founded St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which appears to have engaged his energies before building the Church. Richard Whittington finished it, and an ancient tavern bearing his name still exists near at hand. As the Augustinian

Order for which the Hospital was erected was famous for medical skill, its Members were established there. Priests and Nuns were early associated with its work. It is interesting to note that "Rahere" is the word used for telegraphic communication in Official work, and is conspicuous on letter headings and forms to-day.

Alfune, an aged man of much experience, who built St. Giles's Church in Cripplegate, became its first Hospitaller. He greatly encouraged Rahere, and St. Bartholomew was said to have occasionally honoured him with a miracle. Alfune was very practical in his methods, and went daily to the shambles and stalls in the markets, and begged supplies from the traders; at the same time quoting Scripture, and promising rewards from God in return for their benefactions to the sick and suffering.

There was much need for religious as well as medical work, but rivalries existed among the Ecclesiastics which interfered with its being done. The Priory Church was once the scene of a fierce scuffle between Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, and the Canons,

who resented his visitation. They received him with honour, but acknowledged only the Bishop of London as their Suffragan. Then the Archbishop assailed the sub-Prior, tearing his cope in pieces, and trampling it beneath his feet.

While the Canons were rescuing him, his Grace's attendants fell upon them. Then as many of the Canons as were able ran, all bloody and miry, to his Lordship with loud complaints. He told them to go to the King at Westminster, who refused to receive them. Meanwhile, the whole City became in an uproar, and the Archbishop secretly crept away to Lambeth as a shelter from the fury of the citizens. If such were the character and conduct of its Primate, what could be expected from the Church? Even the people denounced him as an ignorant stranger and extortioner, rather than a winner of souls.

Many elm-trees grew in the neighbourhood, from whose branches criminals were hanged. Stow speaks of one William Fitzosbert, who after being condemned in the Tower by the Archbishop in 1196, was

dragged by the heels to Smithfield and executed. He was known as "Longbeard," and spoken of as a brave patriot. Every possible epithet of abuse appears to have been lavished upon his memory without any foundation whatever. Judge Remy boasted that he had been the means of putting eight hundred witches to death in sixteen years. How many poor deluded creatures perished in view of St. Bartholomew's Church is not recorded. These sufferers were a challenge to Christian zeal and a call for self-sacrificing service.

There was also an annual sale of cloth carried on within the precincts of the Church by permission of Henry II., and proclaimed from one of the gates by the Lord Mayor on horseback, with a Sheriff on either side of him. Clothiers from London, and all parts of the country, availed themselves of its privileges. Booths and stalls were erected among the graves and monuments in the Churchyard, which was enclosed by walls. The gates in these walls were locked and watched each night, to safeguard the merchandise until the sale was over. This

"Cloth Fair" was abolished as recently as the year 1855.

The Churchyard was also the scene of noisy disputations at holiday times. On the eve of "St. Bartholomew's Day," a spot was boarded round under a tree, and scholars from different Grammar Schools contended with each other about their studies. As soon as one Scholar was put up and overcome another took his place, until he who showed himself superior to the rest was acclaimed the victor, and crowned with a garland, or otherwise rewarded. These wranglings sometimes led to rowdyism, to the boys fighting with their wallets of books, and even to insulting their Superiors. Such contentions were supposed to contribute to success in Scholarship, and were doubtless in accord with ancient customs. But chaffering, brawling, and popular excitement, within the Church precincts, were scarcely promotive of Godliness.

Stow also speaks of Wat Tyler, who in 1631 led a rebellion against an excessive capitation tax for replenishing the coffers of Richard II., which failed because of dis-

sensions among his followers. Having been knocked down by Lord Mayor Walworth, he was taken by the King's attendants to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and dragged therefrom into Smithfield and beheaded.

Jack Straw, the second in command of the rioters, was hanged there two days after the death of his leader, and confessed that it was their intention to sack and burn the City.

Between the pillars nearest the North Transept of the Priory Church there is a stone coffin, which was cracked in the middle by some settlement in the foundations. This sinkage loosened the lid, which on being removed revealed a headless skeleton, supposed to be that of one of the King's defenders who was killed during this rebellion.

In contrast with this skeleton minus its head, there is a skull without the skeleton behind a grill in St. Gregory's Church at Sudbury, in Suffolk. This was the head of Simon de Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was slain during the same rebellion.

For services thus rendered the Lord Mayor

and three Citizens, were knighted on the spot. The King, who was only in his fifteenth year, then conciliated the crowds, and with his retinue entered the city in triumph. He afterwards went to his mother at the Tower Royal, who said, "Ah, Son! What great sorrow have I suffered for you this day!" The King replied, "Certainly, Madam, I know it well; but now rejoice, and thank God, for I have recovered mine heritage, and the Realm of England, which I had near lost."

Instead of seeking to correct the evils of Society, and to satisfy the aspirations of the people, the Ecclesiastics allowed executions to become degrading spectacles by which gaping crowds were demoralised. The hideous output from the community as seen at Smithfield was a shocking revelation of human hearts. The Puritan spirit, with its attendant self-sacrifice, was needed in the Church. The priests, however, settled down into self-indulgence, when they ought to have risen into sublime devotion in holy service.

Like many such buildings, some of those

at Bartholomew Close were constructed for storing supplies for carnal enjoyments. Poet and painter have made us familiar with the type of character mere ceremonialism produced. Strype says "it was the monstrous lives of the Monks, Friars, and Nuns, that destroyed the Monasteries and Churches, rather than the Civil Power." When these were dissolved by Henry VIII., the Smithfield Priory was one of them. The Nave was pulled down, the Tower demolished; and the bells, having been sold, were re-hung in St. Sepulchre's Church, but were melted out during the great fire. At that time the living was valued at £635 10s. per annum.

But though much corruption was driven from the Churches by the Regal Power, self-indulgence was followed by intolerance. The Priests, having failed to reform sinners, gave themselves to persecuting saints. In 1553 the King's eldest daughter came to the Throne. Shortly after her coronation in Westminster Abbey she violated all her promises as to respecting the consciences of Protestants. As a Papist she earned for herself the title of "Bloody Mary."

The Choir and the Chapels having been purchased by Sir Richard Rich from Henry VIII., he conveyed them to the Queen. He was Chancellor of "The Court of Augmentation," and his Coat of Arms may still be seen in front of a house in "Cloth Fair." She then transferred these to "The Black Friars," who replaced the Augustinians. The truncated Church still rose impressively in the midst of many hideous evils, but these Friars neither elevated the people nor tolerated those who were seeking to save them. All suspected of heresy were forced to wear badges called "faggots," which consisted of a patch of green embroidery fixed on the back and front of the right sleeve, so that it could be seen by those approaching or following the wearers. These were avoided in consequence, and often prevented from obtaining employment. For taking off such "painted faggots" holy men were often condemned to be consumed by real ones.

In other cases those whose lives were spared were compelled to carry a wooden

faggot before the crucifix at the head of imposing processions, or to stand on the highest step of a market cross bearing a like burden, that they might prove a warning to assembled traffickers or curious crowds. Some of the Lollards were thus dishonoured at St. Paul's Cross. True Christians were also subject to a like indignity when a heretic was to be burned, that contributing to another's martyrdom might terrify them into abject submission. Seeing that the greatest number of burnings took place at Smithfield, many would be compelled to pile fuel for the flames around those with whom they sympathised, but whose devotion unto death they failed to show. These scenes of wickedness have been made realistic before the nation by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners recently appropriating an endowment once left "for buying faggots for burning heretics at Smithfield."

Among the Saints there sacrificed was Anne Askew, who was of noble descent, and as beautiful in character as in person. After being racked in the Tower by order of Sir Richard Knevet, Wriothesley, the

Lord Chancellor, ordered the Lieutenant to torture her again. When he refused, Wriothesley and Lord Rich, throwing off their gowns, subjected her to further sufferings. Being unable to walk, she was placed in a chair, and carried to Smithfield. A sheltered stage with a seat having been erected under St. Bartholomew's Church, this Lord Chancellor of England sat thereon, in company with the Dukes of Norfolk and Bedford, the Lord Mayor, and others, to witness this saintly lady's agony in the fire. Her fellow-martyrs, John Lascels, John Adams, and Nicholas Bolenian, were encouraged by her heroic spirit. The order of the Common Council for erecting this stage and seat can still be seen among the City Archives.

As we have stated, a Puritan Independency had shown itself in many exiles who fled to the Continent rather than outrage their convictions. It also upheld those who remained as they became "living sacrifices" among their own countrymen. But it had its sublimest display in the heroic Christians who were put to death at Smithfield.

What was this Puritan Independency? It was the Holy Spirit expressing His influence in human character, and glorifying Himself in consecrated lives. It incited many to assert their right to enjoy "the glorious liberty of the children of God." "The Black Friars" would often be busy around the stake when carrying out the behests of their Royal Patroness. They co-operated with the Civil Authorities in obedience to their Ecclesiastical Superiors. But having destroyed the bodies of Martyrs, there was no more they could do. The Spirit transfigured their faces in the midst of the flames, while translating them as in fiery chariots into the Presence of God.

The holocausts of Queen Mary's reign are among the greatest cruelties of history. The martyrs burned consisted of 240 from the labouring classes, 7 tradesmen, 9 village gentry of both sexes, 16 priests, and 5 bishops. Altogether, there were 277, but not a single member of the aristocracy was among them. Lecky says that the Romish Church "shed more innocent blood than any other institution that has ever existed amongst mankind."

On the front corner of St. Bartholomew's Hospital wall, nearly opposite to the Gothic doorway through which the Church is entered, there is a mural brass tablet which commemorates the devotion of three of these Martyrs. It has been fixed in recent years, and the record reads: "Within a few yards of this spot John Rogers, John Bradford, John Philpot, and other servants of God, suffered death by fire for the Faith of Christ, in the years 1555, 1556, 1557." There are no such records in the Priory Church. Among the ancient monuments upon its walls not one is to be found which has any reference to the "Slaughtered Saints" of Smithfield. The Priors and Priests could have no desire to perpetuate the memories of those whom they persecuted even unto death.

Even in later years the most terrible scenes met the wayfarer's eyes. In his "Diary" Pepys speaks of calling on Alderman Crow at St. Bartholomew's Close, and says: "I saw the limbs of some of our traytors set upon Aldersgate, which was a sad sight to see; and a bloody week this, and the last has been; there being ten hanged, drawn, and

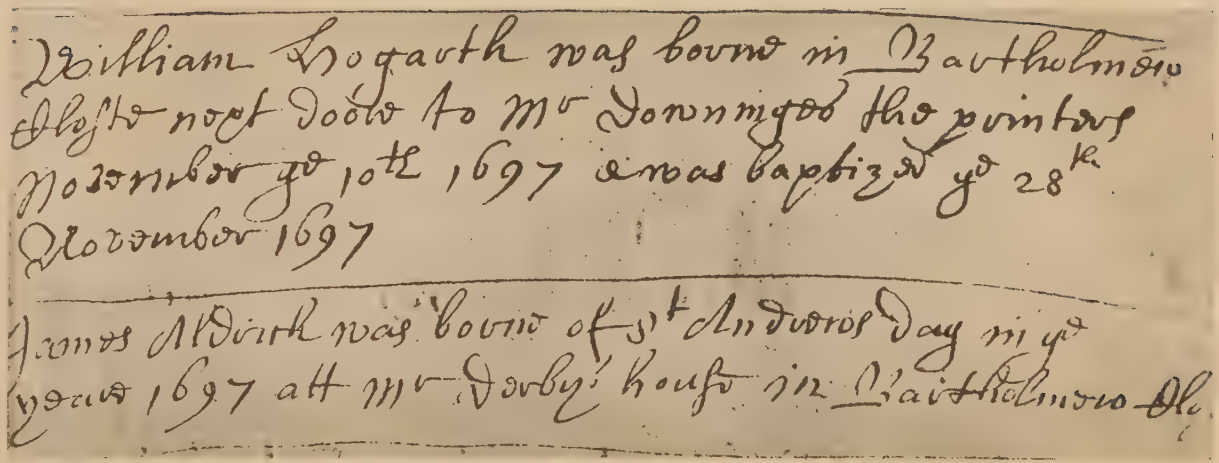
quartered." Smithfield, which is now the great meat market, was for centuries a human shambles.

The members of the Abbey Church were driven into association with these Martyrdoms. They also suffered from Romish intolerance, which had its secret centre in Charles II. but its open hostility toward themselves. Their meeting-place was partly within St. Bartholomew's Priory. While there reminders of Christian Heroes were before their minds, and a martyr atmosphere surrounded them. And they too were ready to die in defence of truth and righteousness, and to "follow those who through faith and patience were inheriting the promises."

In the South Transept there is a small doorway at the foot of a spiral staircase leading up into the Triforium. The arches there have been re-opened, and the pillars which were once embedded in stonework are the only remaining parts of the ancient meeting-house. The outside wall has been built up; but between the one and the other is a section of the floor once trodden by the feet of the Independents from the Abbey. The width of

this sacred spot is 24 ft., which is the same as it was in their day; but some 14 ft. is all that is left of its length. It is the only piece of its area which can now be visited, but it is sufficient to call up inspiring memories of services once held by those who were sacrificing their worldly interests to secure freedom to worship God.

The octagonal Font in "the Baptistery," near the foot of this staircase, is that from which William Hogarth was christened. It is a singular coincidence that the great painter, who was born and brought up in close proximity to the Church, should have his birth and baptism recorded among the names of the children of the Independents. There is "A Registrar of Burialls" in the Vestry of the Priory Church dating from the year 1678 to 1716, which has a record of "Christenings" at the end. In the case of "Dissenters" the dates of their children's births only are given. They were baptized by the Ministers at the meeting-house, whose rite was not then recognised by the Priests of the Parish. Some of these registers, coloured with age, may still be seen at Somerset House.



William Hogarth was borne in Bartholmew
Closte next doore to Mr Downinges the printers
November ye 10th 1697 & was baptized ye 28th
November 1697

James Aldrich was borne of St Andrews day in ye
year 1697 att Mr Derby's house in Bartholmew Clo

FACSIMILE OF THE REGISTER OF BAPTISM OF HOGARTH THE PAINTER REFERRED TO ON PAGE 157.

At the top of several pages of this Priory Register there are the words, "Births of Dissenters' Children." The names, however, of two boys appear in the lists who were sacramentally baptized, and were evidently put there by mistake. The following are exact copies of the records:—

"Henry Albonett, ye son of Philip and Rachell Albonett, was baptised ye first of November 1697, by a minister of ye French Church."

"William Hogarth was bourn in Bartholomew Close, next door to Mr. Downynge's, the Printers, November ye 10th, 1697; and was baptised the 28th November 1697."

Though Hogarth was christened as an Episcopalian, he was influenced by those with whose children's names his own was so curiously associated, and evidently became imbued by the Puritan Spirit. The moral condition of Smithfield in his time was terrible. Scenes had been enacted there for centuries more than enough to demoralise any community. Contemporary accounts speak of many youths who wrecked their lives, and ruined their prospects, in the midst of the

dissoluteness so rife and rampant around the very Church. From these scenes Hogarth found suggestions for his pictures. But "his genius was always enlisted on the side of virtue and morality." "He stands in the highest rank for vigour of realism and dramatic power." The Puritan Spirit finds expression in all his pictures, and has distinct recognition in one of them.

The subjects of many of these tell their own sad tale, such as "The Rake's Progress," "The Harlot's Progress," "Strolling Actresses dressing in a Barn," "Beer Street," "Gin Lane," and "The Cock Pit."

He also satirised the pulpit for failing to grapple with the evils thus portrayed. His picture of "Credulity, Superstition, and Fanaticism" is well known. That of "The Sleeping Congregation" is suggestive of dulness and utter inefficiency. The Clergyman is shown as preaching from the words, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." While listening to him the "dear hearers" have fallen through slumber into sleep. Then seeing they had thus "found peace," the

preacher is represented as saying by a text on the front of his pulpit, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain." He was serious enough in other of his paintings. The subjects of these were taken from the Scriptures, such as "Moses before Pharaoh's Daughter" and "Paul preaching before Felix." He evidently felt that Inspired Prophets and Apostolic Ministers were needed in his own day as among the enslaved Israelites and in the early Christian centuries.

It is clear that he sought to direct men towards Him by Whom suffering could be removed. In early life he painted on the great staircase of St. Bartholomew's Hospital "The Pool of Bethesda" and "The Good Samaritan," in which some figures are seven feet high. These great works were not only suggestive of Curative Agencies, but of Him Who is their Originator and Controller. He presented these to "The Charity," and in recognition of his generosity was made one of its Governors.

Art as well as Religion owes much to Puritan Independency. Thomas Gains-

borough, the great Portrait and Landscape Painter's ancestors were staunch supporters of "The Sudbury Meeting-house" for several generations. In the formative period of his life he attended its Services ; and his boldness of conception and vividness of portrayal were the outcome of his descent and of the spirit he inherited. The effect of this spirit, however, was first seen in Hogarth, who was born some thirty years before him. Whether he ever attended the Services at the Priory Meeting-house, or came into association with either of its Ministers, is not known. In any case it is clear that, in satirising the vices and follies of his time, he was incited by his sympathy for suffering, and influenced by the Puritan Spirit. Though ancient Meeting-houses were often sacked by the Civil Authorities, they have, in many ways, proved an elevating and saving power all over the Nation.

VII

PRIORY MEETING-HOUSES

THE Independent Church from Westminster was brought into relief by its surroundings at Smithfield. The dark elements of criminality and of barbarous executions formed its outer fringe. Then there were the punishments inflicted upon rebels and traitors. Added to these were the corruptions of the Romish Church and her terrible cruelties to sincere Christians. But shining out among all was the sublime self-surrender of those who were regardless of life in obedience to the dictates of conscience. This word yields the secret of their consistency. It is a compound, which comes from *con* and *scire*, meaning "to know with another." There was something between themselves and God which impelled them to

self-sacrifice. And their environment was like a dark setting which brought the splendour of their deeds into prominence, giving promise of the power they would wield in the nation.

For this troubled Church to have gone into such associations was to expose her members to the risk of falling short of sublime ideals, and of seeming dwarfed by comparison before the judgment of history. On the other hand, an opportunity was afforded for honouring themselves by responding to a challenge which came from local memories, and of reproducing examples such as would make them appear zealous in service and illustrious in character, like the noble Army of Martyrs.

The test was severe for a harassed people, especially as they increasingly realised the significance of their surroundings. It is difficult to explain why they removed so far from the Abbey. Some of their number doubtless remained where they resided, and formed the nucleus of congregations which sprang up in Westminster.

The Meeting-house to which most of them went was perhaps the only place available.

How much of sympathetic conversation and mutual encouragement would accompany such a change! It must have caused them great sorrow to leave the sacred precincts within which they had worshipped for ten years. Brief accounts of their withdrawal might be gathered from contemporary newspapers, though the censorship exercised during the Long Parliament was made more rigid at the Restoration. Dr. Calamy, speaking of Mr. Rowe at the Abbey, says, "After the return of the rejected Choirs and Organs there was no further place for him there."

But though Minister and People were driven out of Westminster, they were not separated from National Buildings. After the "Black Friars" had been installed at St. Bartholomew's Church by Queen Mary, they were expelled by Queen Elizabeth, and during her Reign Parliament transferred the Priory to the Parishioners. Though the Choir and Transepts are all that remain, these are the parts which bring us into closest connection with the first settled home of these sorely tried Independents.

It has proved most difficult to locate the

spot to which the Rev. John Rowe led his Followers. The writer, however, has had the great advantage of correspondence and conference with Mr. E. A. Webb, F.S.A., of St. Bartholomew Close, who is Honorary Secretary to the Restoration Fund and Churchwarden. He has made that Noble Building a study for some twenty years, and is its prospective Historian. His Brother, Sir Ashton Webb, R.A., is Architect for its Restoration. The difficulties in the way of tracing the Meeting-house which formed part of it were mainly structural, but its position has been re-discovered, and it can now be fairly described. A portion of it may even be visited by those who feel interested in that historic Sanctuary.

The account of it given by Wilson, who wrote in 1808, is the fullest extant. He says: "This meeting-house is still standing in Middlesex Court, and was part of a large, old building called Middlesex House." "At what period, and by whom it was erected, and to what purpose it was originally devoted there remain no records to determine. Its contiguity to the Priory of St. Bartholomew

renders it no unreasonable conjecture that it was originally a dependent upon the canons of that foundation, and perhaps devoted to the purposes of Religious Worship."

"In former times there was a window that opened from the meeting-house into the adjoining Church. It was situated directly opposite to the pulpit in the latter building, so that a person in the gallery of the meeting-house could clearly discern the Congregation in the Church, and watch the different parts of Divine worship. This singular aperture has not been closed up more than half a century."

"In a corner of the meeting-house there used to be seen, some years back, a very antique Sculpture, representing the figure of a Popish Priest with a child in his arms; and there are several arches filled up with the same sort of trumpery. Underneath appear several vestiges of an antique Chapel, though now used for no higher purposes than a cellar."

"From these remnants of ancient superstition there is every reason to suppose that in the days of Romish ignorance this place was devoted to the purposes of Religious

Worship. At what time it was first converted into a meeting-house by the Nonconformists seems uncertain; though it must have been pretty early. It is not improbable that during the interregnum it was occupied by one of the numerous sects that abounded in that period. During the persecuting reign of Charles II. it was certainly in their hands, and on account of the obscurity of its situation was admirably adapted for purposes of concealment. In several parts of the building there is every appearance of private doors, supposed to have been made to facilitate the escape of the worshippers in that period of affliction."

This meeting-place formed part of Middlesex House, so called after the Earl who lived there from 1630 to 1640. A passage bearing his name is daily trodden by many busy feet. That "House" probably belonged to the Prior's large establishment, and extended into the South Triforium of the Church. From surveys at the Record Office it is shown to have contained in 1616 two chambers and a gallery "with large windows opening into the Church over against the Pulpit."

The dividing walls of these chambers were probably removed, and the two windows made into the one opening through which the meeting-house extended into the triforium. This would exactly accord with its position opposite to the pulpit, and with other descriptions of it. Wilson speaks of Middlesex House as early *converted* into a meeting-house, and refers to Mr. Rowe and his Church as worshipping there.

It may be that such structural alterations were carried out as made it suitable for so important a Congregation. Two galleries were perhaps added to the existing one as the Independents from the Abbey took possession. Wilson tells us that "when Mr. Rowe's Church was cast out of Westminster Abbey at the Restoration of Charles II. he preached to them frequently at the meeting-house in Bartholomew Close"; and that it was probably "occupied by other Ministers occasionally, as the rigour of the times would allow." It is clear from these accounts that all the materials existed for alterations in the fabric such as would make it easy to adapt part of it for a place of

worship. A private Chapel would hardly be large enough for public services.

We have a parallel case near to St. Bartholomew's Close. In St. John's Court, Cow Lane, West Smithfield, there was the City residence of the Prior of Sempringham, in Lincolnshire, called "High Hall." A part of this "hall" was made into a meeting-house about the same time as was that at Middlesex House. During the reign of Charles II. it was occupied in succession by Independent and Baptist Congregations. The Rev. John Yaxley, the ejected Minister of Kibworth, in Leicestershire, preached there for "a considerable number of years, and lived to an advanced age."

Many of such early places of worship were ordinary houses with partition walls knocked down, and even floors removed, and then fitted up according to requirements. Some of these still remain; pictures of others can be seen hanging in the vestries of chapels by which they have been superseded, and are also found in Denominational Journals of the olden days. Sometimes the fronts belonging to the houses out of which they

had been fashioned were retained, and also the windows; so that they appeared more like those of private dwellings than public buildings. The meeting-place at Middlesex House is spoken of as obscure in situation, and might not be easy to find, except by regular worshippers. Adjoining the Church, it may also have been somewhat difficult to recognise.

The question arises, Where was it connected with the Church? The description given by Knight, who wrote in 1851, which is forty-three years after Wilson, has much in common with him. Whether he copied from his account, or had culled particulars from the same sources, cannot now be determined. Happily Mr. E. A. Webb has discovered a Deed in the Vestry of the Priory Church which makes its position clear.

The engraving of that Church given in Knight's "Survey of London" shows its south side, and the remains of the sloping roof of the meeting-house. The fringe factory in "The Lady Chapel" was carried as far as Prior Bolton's window, which was included in it. The triforium between that window and

the transept formed part of the meeting-house *inside* the Church; and the three galleries would be on the east, south, and west sides of it, answering to Wilson's description in every particular.

He also speaks of a window through which a person sitting in the end gallery could see the worshippers in the church. This would have been in one of the blocked-up triforium arches. The semi-hexagonal oriel window in the south triforium is known as Prior Bolton's, who was in office from 1505 to 1532. This window still bears his *rebus*, which is a bolt, or arrow, passing through a tun, or barrel; and being an architect, it was most likely constructed under his own directions. He is mentioned as "a clerk of works" in Henry VII.'s Will, and probably had the oversight of completing the plans of the deceased architect for the beautiful chapel bearing His Majesty's name at Westminster.

Next to Rahere, Bolton was the best known Prior of the church, and is a great surviving memory in the parish. The window probably was a kind of pew, or seat, to which he could go from his private apartments without

exposure to the weather or to the curious attentions of his numerous retainers. Sitting in its shelter, with Rahere's tomb in full view, would be suggestive as he thought of the founder's remains enshrined therein. The doing so would be helpful to his meditations, perhaps when in enfeebled health and declining days.

It might also have its uses in connection with the worship of priests and people. The monks were called, "on the calends of November and other holy periods, to descend from their warm and comfortable dorters, to hurry shivering into the Choir, and engage in the devotions proper to the occasion, whilst the Prior, with a dark lantern, went round to see that each was awake, and properly performing his duty." As that window could be reached from his house, it may be he sometimes watched them from it without their being aware of his presence. He perhaps looked upon them amid the pale moonlight as it streamed through the clerestory into the eastern end of the church.

He would also be able to share sympathetically the ministries of the priests when seen

at the altar and listen to the preachers. At the same time he could follow the services, and be observant of the worshippers, for whose religious interests he felt responsible. The aloofness of such a position would add dignity to his office, and awake reverence for his person. Such a watchful Prior would not be without effect upon both celebrants and congregations.

It must not be too hastily concluded that this is the window to which Wilson refers. The one of which he speaks, he says, existed "in former days." He also states that "it was situated directly opposite the pulpit," and had been "closed up not more than half a century." If this window were there prior to Mr. Rowe's advent, it was most likely fixed by those who preceded him, to enable them to be on the alert for Informers and Warrant Officers. It would then serve the same purpose for his followers. Wilson says that "a person sitting in the end gallery of the meeting-house could see through the window." As it was opposite to that gallery, the pulpit must have stood between it and one of the side galleries. It would have been folly to

arrange secret means of escape unless facilities for keeping watch were used. A member of the congregation was probably appointed as "a watcher" while services were being conducted. This would enable him to give warning to the minister when enemies were prowling about the building. The preacher was often the first they sought to arrest, and many devoted men were hurried from their pulpits into prison.

Then we are told there were vestiges of an antique chapel beneath the meeting-place. These were the remains of the Sacristy, over which it extended into the triforium. A map in the vestry, made about the year 1790, shows that timber was stacked therein. The "large beams" which supported the roof of the meeting-house, its "three deep wooden galleries," and the timber piled beneath its floor, would prove so much fuel for flames, and make a fire most furious there. Hence, when it was burned down in 1830, Knight says, "The interior of the church was much injured, and the entire pile had a narrow escape from destruction." "A portion of the roof of the south aisle fell on the occasion,

and showed it to be composed of rubble-work."

The wall of the church which had been removed, so that this meeting-house might be carried as far as the front of the triforium, has been made up in keeping with the original structure. A comparatively new wall can be seen there, which stands in striking contrast to the old brickwork on the north side. This latter has latticed windows at the top, and a house at the end, which was once occupied by schoolmasters, but now by the verger.

The secret means of escape which are so distinctly referred to by Wilson cannot be traced or described. Similar provisions, however, are spoken of by Knight in connection with the second meeting-house formed out of St. Bartholomew's Chapel, showing how continuous, and extended, were the persecutions of that period. In mentioning the crypt, of which he gives an illustration, he really intends the under-croft of the dormitories, and says that at its extremity there is a door which was supposed to be the entrance to a passage. He adds, moreover, that there is no doubt "the door had been used by the Nonconformist

ministers, who occupied the adjoining chapel during part of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as a means of escape in cases of danger. The door, at all events, opened until lately into a cellar that extended beneath the chapel, and where the fire broke out in 1830, that destroyed the latter, and some parts of the old Priory."

It seems certain "that this chapel formed some portion of the monastic buildings," and was really the Chapter House. "It had an ancient timber roof, and a beam projecting across near the centre; and in a corner there is said to have been a very antique piece of sculpture representing the figure of a priest with a child in his arms. In several parts of the building it appears there were, prior to its destruction, marks of private doors in the wall."

That secret means of escape were needed "in that season of affliction," when "preaching was considered a crime, and imprisonment the consequence of discovery," is evident. Towards the close of the Rev. John Yaxley's ministry at Sempringham Hall he assisted at the ordination of his successor by the laying

on of hands. He is spoken of as "an aged and reverend Divine," while Mr. Powell is referred to as having "preached several years at his residence in Bartholomew Close." But he was driven therefrom "by reason of persecution, his goods having been seized, and himself excommunicated." Not only were there memorials of martyrdoms near this second meeting-house, and remains of Romanism within it, but actual assault was carried on close at hand. The sufferings of those who attended its services are not recorded, but the fact that arrangements for escape were provided shows they were exposed to peril.

There is one historic character who was occasionally associated with the Independents, when they worshipped at Westminster, whose life was in danger. After being two years in residence at Whitehall as Cromwell's Secretary, John Milton was concealed for "four months" in St. Bartholomew Close. His arrest was ordered, and two of his political publications, viz., "Iconoclastes," and "Defensio pro populo Anglicano," were burned by the common hangman at the Old Bailey.

He was probably secreted by some members of the Abbey Church, who were so successful that the proclamation for apprehending him says, "The said John Milton and John Goodwin are so fled, or so obscure themselves, that no endeavours used for their apprehension can take effect, whereby they may be brought to legal trial, and deservedly receive condign punishment for their treason and offences." In order to screen him more effectually from the vengeance of the triumphant Royalists a report was circulated of his death, and the pomp of his supposed funeral gone through. It was said that "his work was rewarded with £20, paid by instalments, and a near approach to death on the gallows."

On August 29, 1660, "an Act of Oblivion" was passed; and as his name did not appear among those who were exempted from its provisions, both his person and his property were made secure. This "Act" must have come into operation during his imprisonment, the day of which is unknown; but there was an Order for his release bearing date December 16, 1660, on the payment of certain fees. The house in which he is believed afterwards

to have lived is one of some gabled buildings to the right hand when facing the entrance door of the North Transept of St. Bartholomew's Church. He survived the great Protector some sixteen years, and Samuel Whitbread, Esq., has placed a Bust over the spot where his body lies buried at St. Giles's, Cripplegate.

The memories of this venerable meeting-house have almost vanished. As the Building has gone there were scarcely any visible reminders of its having existed. It deserved to be recovered from an obscurity which was shading off into oblivion. The Members of "the Abbey Church" occupied it during part of the Rectorate of Dr. Randolph Harrison, who held Office from 1655 to 1663. An interest centres therein which gives it a pre-eminence among similar buildings that once existed in almost every county. It was crowded with inspiring memories and sacred associations, and it is pathetic to recall these Independents in the midst of such suggestive surroundings. Their eyes often looked upon that grey, massive Church, and perhaps they sometimes com-

pared it with the still grander Abbey from which they had been expelled.

It may be they contrasted both buildings with their humble meeting-house. That house, however, became a most sacred place to them, often the House of God, sometimes the Gate of Heaven! Their characters proved as solid as the masonry around them, and their Church more immovable than the pillars of the Priory. They were holy and heroic men, such as are a nation's strength and defence when danger threatens or assault comes.

While the Independents continued to worship in this Priory meeting-house there was one in public authority whose sympathies were entirely with them. Sir Walter Mildmay, who lived during the Reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., rendered his most eminent services to the State while Elizabeth was Queen. On one occasion he complained in Parliament "that many subsidies were granted and no grievances redressed." These words were reported to Her Majesty to his disadvantage, and he is said to have been left "in a Court cloud, but in the sunshine of his country, and a clear

conscience." Fuller testifies to the integrity of his character, and his righteous administration of affairs, alike in relation to her Majesty's interests and those of her subjects.

His sturdy Protestantism is referred to by Foxe, the Martyrologist. On December 29, 1657, Sir Nicholas Bacon, Kt., Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England, delivered an Oration in "the Star Chamber" against Papal intrigues. He also spoke most vigorously of the open circulation of seditious literature for the avowed purpose of dethroning Queen Elizabeth as "Defender of the Faith." Among the sixteen names of Prelates and Peers, Judges and Earls, given of those who were present on the occasion is that of "Sir Walter Mildmay, Kt., Chancellor of the Exchequer."

Though the Queen appreciated his resolute defence of her Throne, she disliked his Puritanism. That would be too pure in its purpose to please Her Majesty. Fuller tells us that after the gallant knight had founded Emmanuel College, Cambridge, she said to him, on his appearing at Court, "Sir Walter, I hear you have erected a Puritan Founda-

tion"; to which he replied, "No, madam! far be it from me to countenance anything contrary to your established laws, but I have set an acorn which, when it becomes an oak, God knows what will be the fruit thereof."

"In spite, however, of Court jealousies he was appointed for carrying out a delicate mission to Mary Queen of Scots, in conjunction with Sir William Cecil. Then he was deputed, in company with Lord Burghley, and other men of title, as bearer of a letter to her at Fotheringay Castle. On arriving there, on October 11, 1586, he was specially chosen, with two of their number, to deliver that missive which charged the unfortunate Queen as being accessory to a conspiracy for assassinating Elizabeth, and thus securing her own freedom. Though she pathetically repudiated this charge while addressing Sir Walter Mildmay, and those accompanying him, she was, nevertheless, tried and executed.

The bearing of Queen Elizabeth towards "Sir Walter" serves to illustrate her hostility to Puritanism generally. He, nevertheless, remained its sturdy supporter and friend. In banishing the "Black Friars"

from the Priory Church, after Queen Mary had reinstated them, she was largely actuated by State Policy. Her Knightly Courtier, however, continued true to his convictions, and was at no pains to hide them. He lived in one of the houses occupied by persons of eminence reared on the site of buildings which once belonged to the Canons at Smithfield. As the materials of them had been sold for replenishing the Royal Treasury, it is not unlikely that, being on the spot, they would be used in the erection of these later houses.

How far his relations with the Priory Church caused its officials to look favourably upon the Puritans cannot be traced. His efforts may have prepared the way for their early occupancy of the meeting-house, which led to the Independents from the Abbey following them. Though these had to endure severe persecutions as soon as Charles came to the Throne, they may have secured some immunity from suffering because of Sir Walter's influence with the Authorities. Whether he ever attended their services, or openly associated with them while at St.

Bartholomew's, is unknown, but it is certainly remarkable that they were received there, and retained their connection with the Church for nearly two centuries.

The mural monument of this great Official is in keeping with his ideas, and the inscriptions on it are of the simplest kind. It has neither figures nor eulogies, but has "six shields arranged in a border, which testify to the illustrious alliances of his family." Mr. Godwin says it is "a mixture of the classic forms then becoming known, with the style which had been in general use." It bears his own coat of arms, with the motto, *Virtuti non vi.* "These are arranged in a square panel with pilasters, which form the third storey of the jamb, while an urn is the apex of the whole."

It is believed that much greater honour would have been conferred upon "Sir Walter" as a reward for his public services but for his Puritanism. Apart from such disability, it is recorded on his monument that when he died he was "Chancellor and under Treasurer of the Exchequer," and "a Member of her Majesty's Privy Council."

The monument also bears a record of his wife's death, who was sister of Sir Francis Walsingham, and some references to his children. It "formerly stood in the Sacristy opposite to Rahere's Tomb, but was moved to its present position in 1865," and restored by Henry Bingham, Esq., in 1870. It was fitting that this monument should be fixed near the meeting-house, and his body rest beneath its shadow, with whose occupants he showed such noble sympathy, and to whom he gave so much practical support.

Seeing he established Emmanuel College, Cambridge, it is pleasing to learn that its Master and Fellows contributed towards the restoration of the Church in which its founder is so conspicuously honoured. That College became the *Alma Mater* of many renowned Independents during the Puritan and Commonwealth period, among the former being John Harvard, who founded the celebrated University bearing his name in Massachusetts. After taking his degree and being ordained, he married the daughter of a clergyman, and sailed for New England. The presence of Sir Walter Mildmay's monu-

ment and remains in the Priory forms another centre of interest to Nonconformists in connection with this noble Church.

The next meeting-place of the Abbey Church was entirely separate from the establishment. It was situated between Brook Street and Gray's Inn Lane, and the Rev. John Rowe lived near. Its history is also involved in obscurity, but it was most likely reared by Nonconformists. It was a small chapel with three galleries. Wilson says: "We think it not improbable that this was the building in Baker's Court still in existence, and used for the purposes of religious worship. It bears the marks of our ancient building, and appears to have been erected in troublous times, when concealment was so highly desirable."

Both meeting-houses tell of anxious days through which the Abbey Church passed. They also speak of a depth of conviction which sustained its members, and kept them in Christian fellowship. Many of these early sanctuaries were established in courts and alleys, yards and lanes, and busy crowds upon great thoroughfares little know how

much they owe to them. Those who worshipped within their walls proved worthy successors of the men of faith who once dwelt "in dens and caves of the earth."

As Christian Confessors they were not always "careful to answer" ecclesiastical and regal tyrants before whom they were arraigned. They had the fear of God, and knew no fear beside! And they animated with "a like precious faith" many who followed them. These have inspired their Successors with the same unwavering courage, and now their Sanctuaries stand out on the world's great highways, and their beliefs are proclaimed in exalted places. They are showing the strenuous Christian manhood which shone in those who preached the Gospel in Cathedrals and Abbeys during the Commonwealth. And the days are coming when, in response to the nation's demands, Inspired Prophets rather than Priests will once more be heard in the grandest Ecclesiastical Buildings of our country, crying as with clarion voices to the classes as well as the masses of its Citizens, that Righteousness alone can exalt the Nation!

In the year 1769 the Independents again occupied Bartholomew Close meeting-house. The Rev. John Towers, who was invited by some seceding members from "Jewin Street Church," to become their Minister, leased the building, and was ordained there, remaining exactly fifteen years. He then removed to a Chapel his Congregation erected in Chiswell Street, which is now used for commercial purposes. The Church, however, continues, and is known as "The Barbican," in New North Road, Hoxton.

The Presbyterians followed the Abbey Church at the meeting-house. Wilson speaks of their Congregation having been gathered towards the latter part of the Reign of Charles II., by Mr. John Quick, the ejected Minister of Brixton in Devonshire.

Britton and Brayley, who wrote seven years after Wilson, say: "In this old, ragged building the author of *Synodicon in Gallia Reformata* preached in the year 1681, and *gathered* a Congregation of Presbyterians, remaining there until he died in 1706."

Wilson speaks of it as "a small, inconvenient, building, accessible by a flight of

steps." He adds: "There are three galleries of tolerable depth, and the roof is supported by large beams after the old manner. The whole building appears in rather a ruinous condition, and evidently wears the marks of a venerable antiquity." He also gives the names of the Presbyterian Ministers, and the dates of their Ministries, and says: "It is apprehended that their Congregations were never large, nor, indeed, would the size of the meeting-house admit of it."

At the beginning of Rev. John Munckley's Ministry, who was ordained in 1717, a Day School was established in the South triforium. As the School Room included Prior Bolton's window, and part of the meeting-house, it must have been of considerable size. It appears to have extended along the whole length of the triforium from the transept to the Sanctuary.

The School is spoken of as "in a little narrow alley on the right hand side, going down to the Chapel, and extending over the South Aisle of the Church."

The notification on the entrance door was, "the Protestant Dissenters' Charity School,

supported by Voluntary Contributions." It was established for "the children of poor Protestant Dissenters, without regard to any Denomination or Party," and was liberally and vigorously maintained. Britton and Brayley, whose works were published in 1815, say that "it was ascended by a wide and excellent staircase admirably adapted for the purpose."

The following items from the Vestry Minute Books at the Priory Church are interesting as connected with its history :—

"The 14th May, 1766. Occupiers of the Meeting-house refused to pay rates, claiming exemption by 'The Act of Toleration.' Counsel's opinion was taken, which was that they were liable."

"The 5th April, 1775. It was rated at £12 to the Trustees' rate, and £4 for the poor rate."

"The 7th April, 1772. The Rector applied to the Patron, William Edwards, Esq., and obtained his leave to stop up the windows in the Church which belong to the rooms occupied by the Trustees of the Protestant Dissenters' Charity School. The

Churchwardens allowed them £12, to open skylights instead."

Such a combination of School and meeting-house must have caused much inconvenience; hence, we find that when Rev. Thomas Madden, one of the later Presbyterian Ministers, settled there, the discomforts of this "small and dilapidated building" were increasingly felt. After having "raised a Congregation at Bartholomew Close," he "removed to a large room which he fitted up" with "an organ, a prayer reader, and other requisites, and where he was much followed." This was "*the Chapter-house*," in the South-west corner of the lesser Close, otherwise known as "St. Bartholomew's Chapel."

In this Chapter-house the Monks formerly sat daily to transact business and to enforce discipline. Sometimes they investigated charges against members of their Order, and where necessary inflicted punishment by flagellation. Within its walls sermons were preached, and absolution was pronounced when one of their number was to be buried. And we read that "opposite the picturesque-looking low porch, with its deep pent-house,

now the entrance into the Church, was formerly an entrance into St. Bartholomew's Chapel." Knight also says that the Chapel had "an entrance gateway from the South Transept," but whether there were any connection with the meeting-house above cannot be determined. If so, there would be a means of communication between it and the Chapter-house, which was on the ground floor level.

A capital engraving of this Chapel is found in some editions of Wilkinson's "Londina Illustrata," with galleries, pews, pulpit, and clock opposite, also a ground plan of the building. It shows only one large beam right across for supporting the walls. This beam is nearly over the front of one of the galleries, and is suggestive of adaptation and improvement. This Chapel has a much more modern appearance than the other could possibly have had, judging from existing descriptions of it. After preaching there for a few years Mr. Madden removed, towards the end of the year 1809, to a new building in Aldersgate Street.

The Rev. John Wesley, M.A., who occa-

sionally officiated in the Priory Church during 1747, conducted "Inaugural Services" at the meeting-house, on December 25, 1765. His followers remained there only a short time. These facts indicate the transition in his ministry as seen at Bartholomew Close. They show that while Presbyterianism and Independency had developed from among Episcopalians in Westminster Abbey, Methodism was coming into existence in the place where these older Historic Bodies formerly worshipped. The three great Denominations—Presbyterians, Independents, and Wesleyans, conducted services there for 175 years after "the Abbey Church" removed to Holborn.

Though the great London conflagration raged around the Priory Church, and a blacksmith's forge long roared within it, yet it was preserved. But on May 3, 1830, many of the buildings in Bartholomew Close were burned down, the fire threatening the very Church. Knight, referring to the destruction of the vestry and Chantry, speaks of "the pile of ruins that filled up all the area of this part."

The Priory, nevertheless, stands in all its massive solidity to-day; and Romanists and Anglicans, Antiquarians and Artists, may often be seen meditating and studying within its walls. It is the oldest existing Church in London.

Many who are familiar with the extensive front of the ancient Hospital overlook the narrow gothic entrance to the left which leads to this notable Sanctuary. It ought to be visited by increasing numbers of Nonconformists, seeing that it enshrines the imperishable heroism of their forefathers, from the memories of which they might gain inspiration for their own lives. Though the sacred meeting-house has gone, the marks of it can be traced. A Mr. Money asked to be allowed to rebuild it, but was refused by the Rector and his Wardens. Such rebuilding would not have comported with the symmetry of the Church they were seeking to restore, nor could a new structure have conserved the sanctities of the old one. A Committee was appointed for repairing the parts which were damaged, and £1,000 was spent for that purpose. This restored Priory of St.

Bartholomew at West Smithfield has inspiring associations for Independents second only to those of the Abbey at Westminster.

VIII

A DESOLATED CITY

THE spirit of intolerance which rose into the ascendant at "the Restoration of Monarchy" soon showed itself in violent hostility towards Nonconformists. A succession of repressive measures was passed for ruining their Churches. In addition to being excluded from all offices in Municipal Bodies, they were not allowed to hold meetings at which more than five persons attended, beyond the members of their own families, then their ministers were prohibited from conducting services within five miles of any Corporate Town; and at length penalties were increased, and informers encouraged. After this they were debarred from employment in all Civil, Naval, and Military Establishments, until, as Skeats says, "Only long

and weary imprisonments, banishments, and starvation satisfied the Episcopal Bench."

On May 19, 1662, "the Act of Uniformity" was placed on the Statute Book, which required "that all who had not received Episcopal Ordination should be re-ordained by Bishops, that every Minister should, on, or before the 24th of August following, being the 'Feast of St. Bartholomew,' declare his 'unfeigned assent and consent' to everything contained in 'The Book of Common Prayer,' on pain of being *ipso facto* deprived of his Benefice; that he should abjure 'the Solemn League and Covenant' as an unlawful oath of supremacy and allegiance; and declare it to be unlawful, under any pretext whatever, to take up arms against the Sovereign."

It was surely one of the ironies of history that a Church bearing St. Bartholomew's name should afford a shelter to the minister and his congregation when driven from Westminster Abbey, and that ministers and their flocks should be expelled from Parish Churches all over the country by "an Act" also bearing St. Bartholomew's name, on a

day appointed for his honour in the Ecclesiastical Calendar.

This "Act" bore upon many clergymen who had been reinstated in the Churches after Charles II. ascended the Throne. Numbers of them had no opportunity even for reading the new Book of Common Prayer before they were expected to conform. The publication of the Act was deferred, and its provisions were enforced before this Prayer Book reached them. The Rev. Richard Steel, M.A., in his farewell sermon at Hanmere, said he was silenced and ejected "for not declaring his unfeigned assent and consent to a book he never saw, nor could see." And he was afterwards persecuted and imprisoned for continuing to minister to the people who followed him.

The spirit of these ministers, in face of the King's attempt to force all his subjects into one faith, showed itself in their united action. In their day there were no railways or motor-cars, no telegraphs or telephones, but only a slow, infrequent postal service. Very few means of inter-communication existed, and scarcely any opportunities for

conference; and yet, in hamlets and villages, in towns and cities, and throughout the Metropolis, they were united, and resolved to obey God rather than man. Had they yielded the Reformation would have been sacrificed; but by their splendid heroism they saved the Nation.

The number of Ministers then ejected has been variously estimated. They are generally spoken of as 2,000, but Dr. Calamy says there were 2,250; Dr. Cotton Mathew 2,500; while the Rev. Professor Urwick, M.A., who carried out much painstaking research, affirms the figures reach more than 3,000. Many of them were the most holy and scholarly men in the country. Their withdrawal from the Churches, though distressing to their congregations, was disastrous to themselves and their families. Their people also endured much persecution, and "the names of 60,000 sufferers have been collected, and of these 6,000 died in prison."

There was, however, one clergyman who published a book in powerful protest against these terrible cruelties. It contains more than seventy pages, and is entitled "The

Conformist's plea for the Nonconformists; or, a true and compassionate Representation of the Present State and Condition of the Nonconformists," by "a Beneficed Minister and regular Son of the Church of England."

In this time of anxiety none knew what was impending. At the latter end of 1664 London was visited by a desolating plague. It was similar to that which had carried off a third of the inhabitants of Amsterdam and many of the citizens of Hamburgh. Its germs are supposed to have been brought over to London in some bales of merchandise. As Smithfield was swampy and insanitary its ravages were specially terrible at St. Bartholomew Close, and in Holborn.

Most of the houses visited by this plague had a red cross painted on their doors, with the piteous words above it, "Lord, have mercy upon us!" Watchmen, with halberts, also stood in front, so that the people avoided them, or passed hurriedly by to escape contagion. Carts constantly rumbled along the dark, deserted streets, while the drivers, ringing a bell, shouted, "Bring out your dead! Bring out your dead!" Some-

times the bodies were placed in coffins, but as victims multiplied they were simply wrapped in shrouds, either because coffins could not be obtained or survivors had become too impoverished to buy them. The meeting-house at St. Bartholomew Close was in the very midst of this awful desolation.

Several things contributed to spread this plague. People sought to conceal the nature of the sickness from which their dear ones were suffering, in case these should be hurried away to some pest-house. Searchers and undertakers were bribed to state a different cause of death lest survivors should be avoided. The departure of friends naturally aggravated the dejection of those left behind. The bells of the carriers of corpses mingled with the tolling of Church bells, and their cries with the cries of the multitudes that were going up for deliverance.

The prevailing disease was intensified by an unusually hot season. No showers came to cool the air or cleanse the channels by which plague germs might be swept away. Pest-houses multiplied, and plague-pits were dug in various places. Many heart-breaking scenes

were witnessed in Moorfields, while the name of Pitfield Street is painfully suggestive. No less than 100,000 of the inhabitants perished during this fearful visitation.

It may be safely said that never did a stricken people so need the consolations of religion, or to be sustained by the hopes which centre in the Risen Christ. They naturally looked to the Clergy recently appointed for comfort amid the sorrows of their sore bereavements, and longed for encouragement while fearing further losses, and even death, themselves. But most of these proved to be mere "hirelings," and fled from their parishes, leaving their pulpits vacant. There were, however, noble exceptions, such as Dr. Anthony Walker, Mr. Meriton, and others; but the majority of them showed no care for the dying among the dead.

Then the ejected Ministers, who were largely in seclusion, revealed the grandeurs of their characters. Many of them felt they could not be restrained by unjust laws, but being constrained by the love of Christ, they proved themselves true pastors. They also preached in the churches, and such were the

crowds which assembled to hear them that they could not reach the pulpits through the usual doors, having to climb over the pews to enter them.

Several of these Ministers did not belong to London, and yet imperilled their lives for the salvation of its citizens. They were like those Christian heroes who sold themselves into slavery in order to carry the Gospel to the slaves, or the missionaries who lived among lepers that these might be cleansed from the leprosy of sin. The Rev. John Turner, who had been ejected from Sunbury, was very active during the plague, and so were the Revs. John Chester, Janeway, Grimes, Jackson, Franklyn, and others, whose names should be "had in everlasting remembrance."

The devotion of the Rev. Thomas Vincent, M.A., who had been driven from Christ Church, Oxford, was truly sublime! After coming to London he was appointed Tutor in the academy of the Rev. Thomas Doolittle, M.A., at Islington. When the plague was increasing its ravages Mr. Vincent resolved to resign his position, that he might be free to minister to the sick and dying. His principal

tried unavailingly to dissuade him from doing so, urging that he was already engaged in most important service, and why should he imperil his life, and bring his work to a premature end? Such an example must have intensified the devotion of the young men he had been training for the ministry at the Dissenting Academy.

As he could not be restrained his ministerial brethren were invited to confer with him. These found he was possessed by an unwavering conviction as to his duty, and that he had consecrated himself to it after much earnest prayer. They, therefore, resolved that his purpose ought to be respected, and earnestly commended him to the Divine care. The people became so fearful that they felt afraid even of nurses, in case these should carry the plague from house to house. There were "few ruffling gallants walking the streets, and few spotted ladies seen at the windows." Even roses and other flowers were neglected lest germs of disease should be inhaled from them. Men avoided conversation in the transaction of business because afraid of contagion. London emptied itself into the country.

Mr. Vincent refers to a woman he saw weeping near the house in which he resided, with a little coffin under her arm. She was carrying her last child to the grave, because none of her family were left to see to its burial but herself. He tells also of a man who through dizziness struck his face against a wall, and was hanging and bleeding over some railings close at hand. He saw him removed to Moorfields, where he was laid on his back under a tree. The devoted Minister spoke to him, but heard only a rattling in his throat, and within an hour he was dead. Some were seen running out into the streets almost naked. Others were heard crying and roaring from the windows, while one in his frenzy burned himself in his bed. He speaks of many churchyards being raised by the numerous burials, and also of the fear lest enough might not survive to bury the dead, and London thus become depopulated.

This heroic Minister preached in one of the Parish Churches every Sunday, and eager inquiries were made each week as to where he could be heard on the next Sabbath. Wherever he went great crowds congregated, and

there was such eager, greedy listening as if another message would never be heard. He tabulated the ever-increasing numbers of those who perished. Only four of the one hundred and thirty parishes in and around the City seemed free from the plague, and these escaped because the parishioners had fled into the country.

In the house where he lodged three men, three youths, one old woman, and a maid were living. Seven members of this family died, but Mr. Vincent was spared. Though "the pestilence walked in darkness, and the plague wasted at noon-day," it did "not come nigh him." He "dwelt in the secret place of the Most High, and abode under the Shadow of the Almighty."

In 1667 he published a book entitled, "God's Terrible Voice in the City in the Plague and Fire of London," which was republished by Dr. John Evans in 1722. Its motto text was from Amos iii. 6, 8: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it? the lion hath roared, who will not fear? the

Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" He modestly speaks of his book as "giving a brief narration of the sad judgment, with some observations of his own, who was in the City from the beginning to the end." The plague ceased about a year from its commencement, on December 19, 1664.

This noble man died some thirteen years afterwards at Hoxton. In the funeral sermon preached by Rev. Samuel Slater he said to the congregation: "Mr. Thomas Vincent stayed with you here in the time of that noisome and greedy pestilence which raged so furiously and devoured so hastily, and numbered out many thousands and tens of thousands to the grave. When others fled for their lives, he kept his station all the while. He knew his duty and safety lay together. He was freely willing to venture his life for the salvation of souls." Many of his seraphic sayings while dying are recorded by one who heard them. His memory long survived him. This sermon was dedicated to Mrs. Mary Vincent and the Church of which he had been the Pastor.

It may safely be assumed that Rev. John

Rowe, who was driven from the Establishment before these ejected Ministers, also worked among the bereaved and dying. His whole career shows that he was possessed by the same spirit. His ministries would be mostly confined to his own congregation, while theirs extended to the people generally. The records speak of their going wherever it was possible to preach to the stricken crowds, and to comfort the people. It is most likely that his services centred upon Bartholomew Close. The Church members probably received his chief attention. Concern for the interests of that Church may be one reason why he is not specially mentioned. Many whom he knew would be sick, or caring for dear ones nigh unto death. Hence he has not become conspicuous in history, like many of his ministerial brethren, in connection with that season of dread and desolation.

From what is known of the members of his Church it is certain that they would not shrink from service in their neighbourhood during the great calamity. Those among them who had been in the Army had a foe to fight the sword was unable to subdue. They could not

marshall their fellow-members as comrades against an invisible and invincible enemy. But they were all animated by Christian courage, and appeals to them from those who were stricken down would not be in vain. There are, however, no records of the untiring efforts of Minister, deacons, and members. We can only think of them in accordance with their known spirit and self-denying history. Though their meeting-house was obscure they doubtless proved benefactors throughout the district as long as strength and resources lasted ; and conferences for mutual encouragement and organised work were possible. As a Church they would illumine the homes of the bereaved, and shine out amid the darkness of the desolating scourge, though at length they may have been scattered until it seemed safe to re-assemble for the worship of God.

Mr. Rowe continued at the meeting-house when Rev. Anthony Burgess, M.A., was at the Priory Church, he having been Rector there from 1663 to 1709. It seems strange that the one building should overlap the other to the front of the triforium, and along nearly the whole length of it. Their places of

worship being thus conjoined did they engage in any form of benevolent work together? Were they sometimes seen conversing, in those distressful times, about the religious interests of the nation? They were both University men, and may have met as Christian gentlemen, though the one had been rejected by his Sovereign and the other was enjoying the royal patronage. In any case they had serious reasons for forgetting their differences during such a terrible calamity.

When the Parliament transferred the Priory to the parishioners "the Close" was made a parish within itself. A vacant piece of land was also appropriated for a burying-ground. The inhabitants were exempt from serving on juries and in various public offices; they levied their own taxes, and appointed constables subject to the control of the City magistrates. They were a close corporation. The vestry-books exist containing the parish records, and also the registers of births, deaths, and marriages. The death registers were accurately kept during the plague, and can still be seen. It may be that Rector and Pastor co-operated, in that season of sorrow,

as servants of Christ, and heard Him saying, "I was sick and ye visited Me." "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these My Brethren, ye did it unto Me."

The surviving members at the meeting-house must have been impoverished and dispirited by their losses. Many of them would be impaired in health through strain and privation. Services were probably prohibited by the authorities. It was difficult to meet even for Christian fellowship. While their dear ones were buried they perhaps feared to linger for those ceremonies such as give sanctity to the open grave. When it was safe for them to assemble what gaps there were in their numbers, what vacant seats in their assemblies! But such was their spiritual cohesion, and the unchanging fidelity to their principles, that they held together as a Church. They would seriously converse about the mystery and meaning of such an inscrutable providence. We may explain their losses by the want of sanitary precautions, but they viewed them as a solemn visitation. They doubtless spoke with emotion about their lost ones and of their own marvellous preservations. Their

pastor must have seemed more dear to them than ever because his precious life had been spared. It is evident from their subsequent history that they came out of their sore trial chastened and ennobled. Perhaps they solemnly resolved so to live as to realise more fully their Christian Brotherhood, until they rejoined the departed to live for ever unto God.

At that time fear was so widespread that the Court removed to Oxford. The Speaker of the House of Commons, Sir Harbottle Grimstone, who engraved his name so deeply in the annals of injustice at St. Albans, was much concerned about his own safety. From the Verulam Manuscripts we learn that some correspondence passed between him and Lord Chancellor Clarendon in 1666, concerning the paralysing effect which the "miserable contagion" had upon all public business. In writing from Oxford he says: "It is indeed a sadd season that we are chased from one place to another to save our lyves. We have reason to complayne of the ill Government of the Citty of London, which for want of the shutting up of infected houses, hath skattered the contagion over the Kingdom. God knows

how long we shall continue free." The most notable families then left Smithfield never to return. A few of their names and coats of arms still exist in the neighbourhood, like lingering reminders of their having resided there. John Milton sought refuge in a cottage provided for him by his Quaker friend Ellwood, at Chalfont St. Giles.

The graveyard of St. Bartholomew's was then more extensive than it is at present. Some Quakers' names are among the plague registers of the church. There were no special reasons for mentioning the Independents, many of whom were parishioners. They had no burial-ground attached to their meeting-house, as some others had in the Metropolis, and the spirit of the age may have excluded their bodies from consecrated soil. And survivors finding that their decimated members were working among a dwindling population, they ultimately migrated with their pastor to Baker's Court Meeting-house in Holborn.

A special burial-ground, however, was provided, which has become sacred to their successors. The Corporation bought some fields in the City Road for the interment of

the poor during the plague, and enclosed them by a brick wall. They once consisted of twelve acres, which now form part of the Royal Artillery Ground. Though very few who died from the plague were buried in these fields there was great need for such a public cemetery.

The history of the English people was actually traceable in burials while the foundations of St. Paul's Cathedral were being excavated. In the lower depths cinerary urns came to light containing the ashes of Romans and early Saxons; above these ivory and boxwood pins appeared that once fastened shrouds together, in which bodies had been buried; higher still stone coffins were unearthed; then there were the accumulated remains of more recent times; with the result that the space around "Paul's Cross" became most offensive to preachers and hearers.

In one of his sermons Hugh Latimer expressed astonishment that a burying-place was not provided outside the City, saying that he had suffered from its smells while listening to sermons. He believed these caused much sickness and disease, and that many a man

had taken his death in St. Paul's Churchyard.

At length large numbers of corpses were carted away from the Cathedral Close and Cripplegate Church to these fields in the City Road. The bodies of three hundred Nonconformist Ministers, and many distinguished men, have also been committed to its care. The remains of the departed from Cathedral, Church, and Chapel, mingle with its soil. These formed a hill which became known as Bone-hill, then Bon-hill, and now Bunhill Fields.

This bone-hill in the fields was at one time more conspicuous than it is now. The level of London rises about one foot in every hundred years. The public road beside this burial-place having been mended or macadamised during 240 years, would thus have risen some 2½ feet. Storms have also swept the surface of the hill and tended to level it. It, nevertheless, still rises considerably above the main thoroughfare. Monuments stand up all over its area affording opportunity for "meditation among the tombs." John Bunyan's is beside the pathway, and he "being

dead yet speaketh," ever calling the citizens from commercial cares to become "pilgrims" to that Celestial City whose Builder and Maker is God.

IX

SPIRITUAL PIONEERS

THE position of Rev. John Rowe evidently became extremely burdensome before leaving Westminster. Charles I. having been executed while he was Minister there caused intense antagonism, and much hostile feeling was made to centre in himself. This was seen after he preached at the burial of President Bradshaw in the Abbey on November 22, 1659. His text on that occasion was, "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart" (Isa. lvii. 1). As a member of the Church its Pastor would speak of his lordship in keeping with his own views as to his Christian consistency and Church relationships. The text alone indicates the estimate formed of his character and career.

In contrast with this view Mr. Anthony

Wood, the famous antiquary and biographer, who wrote "The History and Antiquities of the Colleges and Halls at Oxford," and also "The Lives of Writers and Bishops educated at the University," seriously objected to Mr. Rowe's sermon. He probably heard the discourse, which led him to speak so strongly against it. He says the preacher "took great liberty in speaking to the honour and praise of that *monster of men*." His words show the divergence of opinion and bitterness of feeling that existed concerning the execution of the King.

Then during Mr. Rowe's ministry in the Abbey Cromwell died, and Monarchy was restored; and his six years' pastorate there were crowded with events big with serious issues to himself, the Church, and the nation.

The work of one assistant minister—Rev. Samuel Wood, M.A.—deserves special recognition. He appears to have been educated at Cambridge, and according to the dates given by Wilson, he shared the oversight of the Independent Church during the whole ten years it worshipped at Westminster.

His co-operation with Mr. Strong could

have been only partial, because he is spoken of as being at Christ Church, Newgate Street, at the same time. While there he would be the colleague of the renowned Rev. William Jenkyn, M.A. He was most likely a lecturer, and was highly esteemed for his abilities and service.

On May 10, 1651, he published a sermon on the death of Sir William Armyne, entitled "The Saint's entrance into peace and rest after death." He would then have been Mr. Strong's assistant about twelve months. This worthy baronet was once Member of Parliament for Boston, and also for Grantham. He was, likewise, Sheriff of Lincolnshire and Huntingdonshire, as well as Member of the Council of State. He accompanied Charles I. to Scotland in 1641, and discussed terms with him on behalf of the Parliament at Oxford in the year 1643.

It is said that Mr. Wood was called from Christ Church "to assist Mr. Rowe in Westminster Abbey." This looks as if he were invited to something more than occasional service such as he formerly rendered. It implies that he gave up the dual position,

and became wholly engaged at the Abbey. With the growth and prosperity of the Church under Mr. Rowe, his entire co-operation would be needed. In the year 1659 they unitedly joined in a commendatory epistle to Mr. Timothy Woodroffe's treatise on "The Song of Solomon." In the following year they were both ejected from the Abbey.

This was not the only trial Mr. Rowe had to bear during that terribly critical year of 1660. His father was then lying prostrate at Crediton, and he would often be called away to visit him during his prolonged illness. The journeys backward and forward must have been wearisome. The children are spoken of as gathered around their sick and dying parent. Very touching and characteristic were the words he addressed to the Abbey Pastor. He said at one of his visits, just before his death: "My son, take heed to the Ministry that thou hast received in the Lord that thou fulfil it. This will tend to the glory of God, the good of souls, and to thine own account in the Day of Christ, the great Shepherd of the Sheep." The father

died a few months before his son was driven from the Abbey. Burdened with this heavy personal sorrow, and weighted with the care of a most important Church, whose very existence was in peril, Mr. Rowe went forth not knowing whither he was going.

The father having watched the troubles to which this Church was exposed, as events were hurrying towards a crisis, would feel oppressed as he thought of the serious responsibilities centring in his son. The solemn charge he gave him must have been soul-stirring in the extreme, and could never be forgotten. Spoken by a voice quivering with paternal solicitude, it would seem to come from within the Invisible and Eternal. It may, in part, explain the son's unceasing consecration to his work. Perhaps it incited him to attempt great things in face of unparalleled difficulties, to perform deeds which seemed superhuman for the Church's welfare, for a testimony to the nation and the glory of God!

The changes which came over the country evidently led to the separation of Mr. Wood from Mr. Rowe. He afterwards served as the colleague of Rev. Matthew Barker, Rector of

St. Leonard's, Eastcheap, from which both were ejected by the Act of Uniformity in 1662. His case, therefore, illustrates the two ejections that took place, the distinction between which is seldom recognised. Many Ministers were driven from the Churches at the Restoration of Monarchy in 1660; and many others in consequence of the Act of Uniformity in 1662.

Mr. Wood then appears to have settled at a meeting-house in Blackfriars. In Maitland's "History of London" this place is mentioned during the great plague. "It consisted of four rooms opening into each other, with lattice partitions, each room being conveniently fitted up with benches and forms." Mr. Wood had the oversight of a congregation assembling there. When the Churches were destroyed by the great fire the Clergy "thought it lawful to rob their Brethren, the Nonconformists, of the meeting-houses, and that of Mr. Wood shared the common violence."

It was clearly the force of circumstances, and the changed position of the Church, which separated Mr. Wood from Mr. Rowe. There is not the slightest hint of any disagree-

ment between them, though the former seems to have drifted into the Establishment. The last time we read of him he was at Mr. Rowe's funeral. He had highly esteemed his Senior Minister in life and honoured him in death ; and speaks of his being " buried in the presence of very many of his own persuasion." Numbers of these would be known to Mr. Wood when he was Assistant Minister at the Abbey.

While worshipping there the congregation must have been somewhat cosmopolitan ; but Mr. Wood's remark shows that after leaving it the Church was thoroughly Independent like its Minister. Its members were in fullest sympathy with his beliefs and aims. To lose an assistant like Mr. Wood, at such a crisis, probably complicated Mr. Rowe's difficulties, especially while leading them out into an uncertain future, not even knowing where they were to assemble for the worship of God.

It was sublime to see this solitary Minister, as friends were falling away and enemies gathering, going forth as an intrepid " spiritual pioneer." Though his Church had been so

prosperous, it was now exposed to ruin. The reinstated Ecclesiastics and Regal Authorities were hostile to his movements; but he never hesitated or faltered. In leading his people from place to place he retained their affection, and lived in their confidence. They "continued to meet privately," but at length emerged from their successive trials in considerable strength for elevating and purifying the life of London.

They then secured, as we have seen, what seemed like a settled home, in connection with St. Bartholomew's Priory. But Mr. Rowe was not always able to conduct the services. Other Ministers sometimes officiated. He preached only "as the rigour of the times would allow." His Ministry was seriously interrupted, and his life was often in danger; but Mr. Rowe was no ordinary Minister, nor were the Church members ordinary adherents. He was not followed by a straggling congregation, but by A COMPACT COMMUNITY composed of Christians who had deep convictions, and were prepared to suffer for them. This alone explains their steadfastness and courage. They showed that they were "a band of men

whose hearts God had touched," and he proved to be a Pastor "who had understanding of the times to know what Israel ought to do."

Some light is thus thrown upon the size of the meeting-house in which they first assembled. It was not a large building, but when filled by such heroic souls they would form a Church which priests could never daunt, nor difficulties deter. Theirs was no weakly organisation, but consisted of those whose religious life had been made strenuous by self-sacrifice, and who were intrepid in supporting their minister. They became oblivious to their worldly interests in their whole-hearted surrender to their Lord.

It appears that with advancing years the keeping of such a harassed Church together was proving too great a strain upon Mr. Rowe. The renowned Theophilus Gale, who also was a native of Devonshire, became his co-pastor in the year 1666. He was a son of Dr. Theophilus Gale, Vicar of King's Teignton, and Prebendary of Exeter Cathedral. In 1647 he entered Magdalen College, Oxford, John Howe being one of his fellow-students. Having greatly commended himself

to Dr. Wilkinson, its President, the Bachelor of Arts degree was conferred upon him in 1649, "in recognition of his extraordinary proficiency and commendable conduct." In the following year "he was elected a Fellow of his College."

In the early part of his Academic life Mr. Gale read Grotius's treatise "On the Truth of the Christian Religion," and this suggested to him that it might be made to appear that "the wisest and most renowned of the Pagan philosophers borrowed the most rational of their sentiments, and were indebted for their most sublime contemplations, as well natural and moral as Divine, from the Scriptures; so that how different soever they might be in their appearance, not only their Theology, but their Philosophy and Philology, were derived from their Sacred Oracles."

In the year 1657 he was appointed a Lecturer in Winchester Cathedral, where he remained until the Restoration. Being unable to conform, he was ejected in 1662, losing both his Fellowship and Lectureship. In spite of these disabilities he finished writing his great work, "THE COURT OF THE

GENTILES," and applied "as a member of the University" to Dr. Fell, the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, for "a licence to commit it to the press." This was granted with much readiness. Mr. Gale published the first part in 1669, in order to ascertain how it was likely to be received in the literary world. He was encouraged by the welcome accorded to his work in this country, and especially in Germany. Its issue was completed in four parts by the year 1677: then the whole was translated into Latin, and was a means of spreading the author's fame over every part of Europe.

In this country he was often visited by persons of distinction, who, while differing from him in regard to the controversies of those times, entertained the greatest respect for his character and attainments. The Oxford historian spoke of him as "a man of great reading, well conversant with the writings of the Fathers and old philosophers; a learned and industrious person; an exact philologist and philosopher; a good metaphysician and School Divine."

That Mr. Rowe could secure the assistance

of such ministers is a striking testimony to his own ability and to the intelligence of those associated with him. But the work of this beloved Pastor from the Abbey soon came to an end. His last sermon gave the key to his life, which was one of surrender to the Divine Will. He closed this discourse with the words, "We should not desire to continue longer in this world than to glorify God, and should be ready to say, 'Farewell time, and welcome blessed eternity; even so, come Lord Jesus.'" He died in his own home, near Baker's Court Meeting-house, on November 12, 1677, in the fifty-second year of his age, and his remains were buried in the family vault at Bunhill Fields.

Now, while Mr. Rowe had proved so strong in contending for the spirituality of the Church, and so courageous in leading her forth into liberty, Mr. Gale was a pioneer in freedom of thought and comprehensiveness of sympathy." He was "justly admired for the happy mixture of solid reasoning, learning, and piety by which his pulpit discourses were distinguished." Though "Baker's Court" congregation enjoyed his

liberal-minded and large-hearted ministry only some twelve years, it must have been very effective to cause the meeting-house to become specially known by his name rather than that of Mr. Rowe.

Even after his public life closed he continued to instruct ever enlarging congregations through his works. The thoughtful study them to-day, and his views are held by many of the most intelligent missionaries to Eastern peoples. They are teaching Orientals that the truths in their own religions are adumbrations of still greater truths of which they are the messengers. The glimmerings of light in these have emanated from a central Glory—are shining from the Sun of Righteousness.

In addition to being a preacher he was Principal of an Academy, and the gifts for a pulpit and a Professor's Chair are rarely so happily combined as in Mr. Gale. His predecessor was a Calvinist, as were many Puritan Independents, but he was guided by clearly defined principles, and believed there was a special Providence over Christians. Their lives were to be lived in harmony with

Divine purposes. Such convictions formed strong characters, and made men resolute in the pursuit of duty, hence their commanding influence in the Church and the nation.

Now, while Mr. Rowe may have been somewhat contracted in his views, Mr. Gale was most comprehensive. He recognised the truth there was in Calvinism, and in his book entitled "Divine Predetermination" he vindicated its followers against the charge of making God the Author of sin. He had a grand intellectual range and a vast spiritual outlook. His beliefs concerning the Gentiles may in part account for the spirit shown by the Abbey Church in its later history towards the heathen. The tradition of his teaching would long be cherished, ever tending to mould its character, and incite its members to action. Such a master mind could not fail to imprint itself upon them and their families, and also upon the students who enjoyed his tuition. He evidently attracted many brilliant young men, who so profited by his training that some of them rose into distinction, and their names are revered in the Church and the world to-day.

Meanwhile Mr. Gale was not left by himself. Being in indifferent health, the Rev. Samuel Lee, M.A., who was chosen as assistant, temporarily shared his duties. Among all associates, and through all changes, this gifted man showed himself a pioneer of Nonconformity. He was steadfast in the espousal of its principles and spirited in their defence. But he always sought to convince rather than compel any who differed from him. His unfailing interest in these principles was shown by his bequeathing all his real and personal estate for educating young men for the ministry; and while reserving his philosophical books for their use, he left the greater part of his well-chosen library for the promotion of useful learning, to Harvard College, in New England. He died at the latter end of February, or the beginning of March, 1678, in the fiftieth year of his age.

But as one leader dropped the standard another was ready to uplift it. As each gap was made some follower was eager to fill it. One of Mr. Gale's students became his successor in the Pastorate, and in the Presidential Chair. Mr. Thomas Rowe, coming

under his father's influence in early life, and being educated by Mr. Gale, might be expected to develop nobly and to act heroically. Having inherited brilliant gifts, and diligently cultivated them, he proved to be specially qualified for his responsible position. When God was about to call Mr. John Rowe and Mr. Theophilus Gale away within a short time of each other, He was completing the preparation of Mr. Thomas Rowe for taking their place. Mr. Rowe was elected as Minister in the same year that Mr. Gale died, and Mr. Lee continued with him for some twelve months, until 1679.

It was very natural that the Church should feel drawn towards Mr. Thomas Rowe. As a youth he had worshipped with its members during his father's ministry at Westminster, and shared their wanderings after they were ejected. His presence would alleviate their sorrow for the loss of their old pastor. He was only twenty-one years of age when he was chosen, and Mr. Lee most likely remained with him on account of his youth.

"But such were his attainments in learning

and piety, that he was deemed duly qualified for the pastoral office." As minister and people were driven together by persecution, the attachments between them must have been of no ordinary kind. They would be intense and tender in the highest degree. Mr. Rowe was also beloved for his father's sake; and he showed himself worthy of confidence, and fully equal to the demands of both the Church and the Academy.

When the Revolution in 1688 insured more favourable conditions for Free Church life, Mr. Rowe became the leader in bringing about some concentration of Christian agencies. While Minister in Holborn he would often think with loving interest of the ancient meeting-house at Bartholomew Close, and visit it as the scene of his departed father's labours. It was then occupied by a minister related to him. One of the earliest Presbyterian ministers who settled there was Rev. John Munckley, who had married into the family of the Rowes, and was "particularly happy in the friendship of his kinsman, Mr. Theophilus Rowe," who was the son of Benoni, Mr. Thomas Rowe's own brother.

As Mr. Rowe was at that time pastor at Holborn, he removed his Academy to Little Brittain, in Aldersgate Street. It had been taken from Stoke Newington to Clapham, and then transferred to the City. The young men whom he was training would thus enjoy his more continuous supervision and ministry, and gain experience by co-operation with him in some departments of his Church work.

In the same year his brother Benoni was called to Fetter Lane Chapel. The latter was born while his father was at the Abbey, and afterwards passed through privation into public life. There were peculiar difficulties connected with this Pastorate. His culture, too, would give acuteness to his sufferings, for he was "a superior Scholar, Poet, and Historian." As these two brothers exercised their Ministries so near to each other they would occasionally exchange pulpits. And the Academy being close to their Churches, they together exercised a widespread influence throughout the City of London.

This Academy greatly prospered under Mr. Thomas Rowe's presidency. Several of his students rose into prominence. One of

them—Mr. Josiah Hart—conformed, and became Archbishop of Tuam. Wilson says that "to his exertions as a Tutor the Dissenters were indebted for a race of Divines who filled their Church with great reputation." The Rev. Samuel Jones was equally successful with his Academy at Tewkesbury, Bishop Butler, author of "The Analogy of Religion," being one of his students, as was Dr. Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury.

Another who wielded an influence surpassing that of either of these Episcopal dignitaries studied at Mr. Rowe's Academy. That influence was not confined to Nonconformity, but is continuous and world-wide. Isaac Watts began his studies there in 1690, and at the age of nineteen years joined the Church which had his Principal for its Pastor.

He came into rivalry with his tutor's nephew, Mr. Thomas Rowe, as a suitor for the daughter of Rev. Samuel Singer, a Dissenting Minister, who had been imprisoned for Nonconformity in Ilchester Jail. This young lady showed great taste for the fine

arts, and much genius as a poetess. Her friends called her "the Nightingale" because she sang so sweetly. She was also a good linguist, having special knowledge of French and Italian, and was equally celebrated in the world for ability as in the Church for piety.

Mr. Thomas Rowe being the favoured one, she married him, but their union was of short duration. In his eagerness to prepare for public usefulness, in which he might prove worthy of his scholarly ancestry, he brought himself into consumption by excessive study, and hastened his end. The estimate he had formed of his wife's spirit and character was beautifully expressed during his illness. He wrote some tender verses under the name of "Delia," in which he says of her:—

"Short be my life's uncertain date,
And earlier far than thine, the destined hour of fate,
Whene'er it comes, may'st thou be by,
Support my sinking frame, and teach me how to die."

He evidently felt she could console him in

death as she had cheered him in life. He passed away at the early age of twenty-eight years.

Though Isaac Watts was not the accepted suitor, he cherished neither resentment nor jealousy. He rather sought to honour the lady by publishing her work, entitled "Devout Exercises of the Heart," a second edition of which appeared in 1739.

And neither was there any wrong feeling between the Rowe families. At the age of twenty-seven years Isaac Watts was chosen to succeed Dr. Chauncey at Miles Lane Chapel, where the tune bearing that name was composed and sung. He had been Assistant Pastor for four years, and among his predecessors were such notable Divines as Caryl, Owen, and Clarkson. His Principal took part in his Ordination, in company with Rev. Benoni Rowe, and preached from the words, "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud, for the Lord hath spoken" (Jer. xiii. 15). He always referred to his Tutor and Pastor with the highest regard and honour, and in one of his "Lyric Poems" thus wrote of him:—

"I love thy gentle influence, Rowe,
Thy gentle influence like the sun,
That bids our thoughts like rivers flow,
And choose the channels where they run."

But though the finest feelings were shown in connection with this "love affair" by all concerned, Mr. Watts's affections appear to have been confined to his first attachment. He would be strongly drawn to such an accomplished lady as Miss Singer, and failing to secure her as his wife perhaps explains his remaining single. He afterwards gave his whole-hearted attention to his work as a preacher and a poet. His hymns and poems surpassed all that came from the Episcopal Church. He awoke the harmonies of devout souls, and has set Christians singing among all nations.

After resigning his "Charge" at Miles Lane through ill-health, Sir John and Lady Abney received him as their guest at Stoke Newington. The gates of their park are still at one entrance to the cemetery. He is said to have gone there for three weeks, but he stayed thirty-six years. His generous hostess stated that she considered his visit

"the shortest her family ever received." He died in the home of the Abneys in 1748, at the age of sixty-four years, and, in accordance with his own request, his body was buried in Bunhill Fields, where the remains of so many Free Church Confessors rest, as do those of the great Pastors of the Abbey Church, of which he was once a member. He was always true to Congregational principles, and wrote on "The Unscripturalness of a State Church," contending for "the Headship of Jesus Christ."

But though he became a Member of the Independent Church after its ejection, he has found a place in the Abbey in unlooked for ways. In grateful remembrance of his services to Christendom, a bust of him was fixed in fitting association with the memorials of John and Charles Wesley. Some years since Dean Stanley called Dr. Stoughton's attention to its need of restoration, who induced the Coward Trustees to restore it. There was special appropriateness in their doing this, seeing Dr. Watts was one of the first members of that body.

He is heard at Westminster in his inspiring

songs at National Thanksgivings, on great Public Festivals, and when Monarchs are being carried out to burial. He has incited enormous assemblies of Rulers and Nobles to seek and sing to Him Who is "our help in ages past," and "our hope for years to come." The ejected Church to which he belonged, and the Academy where he was trained, are honoured in him. This recognition of his worth at Westminster, and of the power he exercises in its Services, is now universally accorded to him. He will continue to be heard in that grand National Temple as the years roll into the centuries, and by all classes as they rise into being from generation to generation, and gather there to offer praises unto God.

The interests of the Church do not appear to have suffered in consequence of Mr. Thomas Rowe's attention to academic work. His Ministry attracted good congregations until its close. He was seized with a fit near the Monument, and falling from his horse, immediately expired.

It may be the Church erected the family vault in Bunhill Fields in honour of his

father, but he most likely wrote the epitaph. It is touching to note his unwillingness to forget his old tutor and his desire to acknowledge affectionate indebtedness to him. Hence he placed his name beneath that of his own father, with a statement that his body was resting near at hand. Then his own name comes below that of Mr. Theophilus Gale's, and following his was the name of his brother Benoni. The mortal remains of these illustrious Ministers of the Abbey Church lie close together, and their memories were perpetuated on the same monument. They formed links which connected that Church with Westminster Abbey, Smithfield Priory, and Baker's Court Chapel. Time has effaced these inscriptions, but Wilson has preserved a copy of them (printed at end of book, *see page* 312). Those of whom they spoke were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths were not divided.

Their life-story will scarcely be complete without some further reference to the

REV. SAMUEL LEE, M.A.,

who was their colleague. He was the only

son of a wealthy London citizen, who sent him to Magdalen Hall and Wadham College, Oxford. While there he distinguished himself as a classical scholar, an author, and a scientist. He was also made a Fellow of his College, and Proctor of the University during the Vice-Chancellorship of Dr. John Owen.

He tells us that while engaged in writing his book, "The Temple of Solomon," he was subject to much envious feeling, and he compared the tongues of his slanderers to "sharp swords and empoisoned arrows," and prayed that the Lord might rebuke and forgive them. He said men who saw spots in the sun often found that these were caused by a fly upon the glass through which they looked, and that his traducers were misled by the medium they used in forming their estimate of himself. He then wisely resolved to become absorbed in his studies, and to show by his life his superiority to their calumnies. When his book was finished he dedicated it to "The Reverend and Learned, the Wardens, Fellows, and Students, of Wadham College," and it was so highly estimated that it was published at the request and expense of the University.

Mr. Lee was a minister who thought for himself, and honoured his convictions regardless of consequences. He shared the anxious unrest of those associated with him. The meetings of "The Westminster Assembly" were the cause of endless disputations. Its members held 1,163 sessions during the five years of its existence. The Independents could gain no concessions from the Presbyterians, who scouted the idea of tolerating them, and even required conformity to their own beliefs and practices as the sole condition of being comprehended in one Church. The Independents resisted all such coercive action as an outrage upon conscience, and said they would rather go to some other part of the world than sacrifice their freedom.

The sympathies of Mr. Lee were with them, and he showed much unselfishness in most trying circumstances. After his mother died he inherited the family estate, and devoted his wealth to charitable purposes. He liberally contributed to the assistance of some Hungarian ministers who came as refugees to this country.

On leaving the University he was "pre-

ferred by Cromwell to the Living of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate." He is spoken of as "fixed minister" there, and of having rendered great service in the parish for some three or four years. When serious changes seemed impending Dr. Wilkinson, who was one of his tutors, conformed, and having been made Bishop of Chester, urged Mr. Lee to be re-ordained in the Established Church. He declined these overtures, refusing to accept preferment at the expense of his principles, and was ejected by the Rump Parliament.

After this he was appointed Lecturer at the Ancient Church in "Great St. Helen's," sometimes called "The Westminster Abbey of the City," because it is so rich in historical Tombs and Monuments. It is situated at the back of "Crosby Hall," which was once a King's palace, and is worthy of a visit if only on account of its antiquities. He was not silenced at the Restoration simply because he had no "Living" to lose. He was then more of an Independent than a Presbyterian.

At that time two notable Independents suffered ejection, the Rev. Joseph Caryl, M.A., and Dr. John Owen. In the year

1657 the latter gave place to Dr. Conant as Vice-Chancellor at Oxford, and in 1659 he was cast out of the Deanery of Christ Church. On coming to London he preached as often as persecution permitted. Caryl and Owen having been true Christian Brothers throughout the Commonwealth, were thus brought into closer fellowship. The former having died while Minister of a Congregation in the neighbourhood of St. Magnus, near London Bridge, the latter was invited to its Pastorate while holding a similar position in Leadenhall Street, with the result that the two Churches united. They met for joint worship on June 5, 1673, and Dr. Owen preached from the words, "Above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. iii. 14).

Mr. Caryl had left 136 Communicants, and in the one Church there were 171 members. This was a considerable number in such times of hostility and unrest. The position of many among them must be taken into account, such as "Lord Charles Fleetwood, Sir John Hartopp, Colonel Desborough, Brother-in-Law of Oliver Cromwell, James Berry, a distinguished Officer in the Commonwealth

Army, also Lady Abney, Lady Hartopp, Lady Vere Wilkinson, Lady Thompson, and the celebrated Mrs. Bendick, grand-daughter to Cromwell, and remarkably like the Protector in some of the strong features of her character."

It is probable that most of these notabilities had been Members of the Church at the Abbey.

The Rev. Samuel Lee, M.A., of whom we are speaking, was trained under Dr. Owen at Oxford, and renewed his friendship with Mr. Caryl, in London. He, therefore, sought fellowship with them when he was ejected from Bishopsgate. After joining Dr. Owen's Church he appears to have become his co-worker in the Ministry. This is evident from the following Dedication of his Book, "ECCLESIA-GEMENS; or, Twelve Discourses on the Mournful State of the Church, with a Prospect of her Dawning Glory." These were published in the year 1667. The dedication is: "To the Holy Church lately walking in communion with Mr. Joseph Caryl, and now with Dr. John Owen, before whom these exercises were handled, and to whom they are

now humbly presented by their's in the Fellowship of the Gospel, S.L."—*i.e.*, Samuel Lee.

In 1678 he was called to be Minister of an Independent Congregation at Newington Green, where he remained for some fifteen years. As we have seen, he there came into association with Rev. Theophilus Gale, and was appointed as his assistant at the time when the latter was chosen Pastor of the Abbey Church. This relationship continued until Mr. Gale's death, though Mr. Lee remained for another year with Rev. Thomas Rowe. The most exacting demands would be made upon him while the Church was bereft of such a devoted and scholarly Minister as Mr. Gale, and when his successor, Mr. Rowe, was taking Academic duties upon himself. His ministry was exercised at a critical time in that Church, as well as in the nation.

The members having confirmed him in his position, he was in every way worthy of becoming sole Pastor had they been desirous of appointing him, and he were willing to remain among them. As he was of a sensitive disposition, he perhaps shrank from the responsi-

bility involved. From the dates of his association with Mr. Gale it is evident that his Ministry was exercised at Baker's Court Meeting-house, from which he retired in the year 1679.

In September of that year he settled on an inherited estate at Bisseter, King's End, near Bignal, in Oxfordshire. While there he edited and published Rev. John Rowe's thirty sermons entitled, "Emmanuel." In 1685 we find him at Abbots Langley, near St. Albans, which was a stronghold of Nonconformity during the Commonwealth. He remained in this place after the Restoration, and the very strength of its Independency may have invited the special activities of its persecutors.

Parish records, and Provincial archives, often show that these smaller places made the greatest demands upon the patience and courage of earnest and holy men. Abbots Langley proved to be a centre of agitation and trouble for Mr. Lee, and it is said that "he left a good estate for the sake of peace, and a quiet mind, and about the year 1686 went to New England."

On landing he was received with every

respect, and in May of that year was called to the Pastorate of a newly-formed Church at Bristol. But his heart was in the Old Country. After three years' oversight of this Church, and having "heard of the glorious Revolution" of 1688, he started for England. But the return journey led him into the crowning disasters of his life. Such a scholarly and benevolent Minister deserved something better than the sorrow and death which awaited him.

He had a presentiment before sailing for these shores that calamity would overtake him, and spoke of it to his wife. He, nevertheless, left Boston on board the *Dolphin*, under the command of Captain Foy, on October 2, 1691. The vessel, encountering wintry winds, was driven upon the Coast of Ireland, and attacked by a French Privateer. Being several times on fire and in danger of sinking, her Captain was compelled to surrender, and all on board were taken prisoners into St. Malo, where the ship was retained as a prize. Then the culminating trouble of his life overwhelmed him. The King ordered his wife, daughter, and two servants, to be sent to

England. This was done without his knowledge, and he was left behind.

He also lost all his money and goods, and was terribly grieved at being so cruelly treated in a strange country. Priests pestered him to conform to Romanism, but he remained faithful to his convictions. Fever supervened, and he died broken-hearted at the age of 64 years. This Saintly and Scholarly Minister was denied a Christian funeral, and Anthony Wood, in his History, says he was "obscurely buried about Christmas in a poor piece of ground joining to a river's side near the city, where we shall leave him to expect the last trump, unless any of his relations will hereafter remove his body to his native country of England."

His career serves to show the cost at which holy men honoured their principles in those troublesome times. It is specially interesting because of his association with the later Ministers of the Abbey Church. After serving with them as "Spiritual Pioneers" in this country, he carried the Gospel into Foreign Lands. While they were buried amid the sympathies of sorrowing friends, his body was

cast out and laid in some unknown grave. But though the sea separated him even from wife and children, he continued to "endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," and was "faithful unto death."

X

TRIED BY FIRE

IT appears that Rev. John Rowe was without assistance during the plague. The resources of the Church would be impoverished after leaving the Abbey, and with fewer Members a Co-Pastor was probably thought unnecessary. He had continued as its Minister for eleven years, when the desolating scourge swept away such multitudes of the people. This must have increased the difficulty of any early appointment of a second Pastor.

The plague came about five years after he left Westminster, and in some fifteen months the great fire followed. While the one carried away a number of Church Members, the other consumed the homes of those who remained. But this fire destroyed the prevailing disease,

and myriads of rats that bore its germs everywhere, with the result that all signs of it soon disappeared.

It also insured the planning of wider thoroughfares and the building of better houses, but was none the less disastrous to the Citizens. Some residences had thatched roofs; and there were many timbered structures similar to the few that are left, which proved so much fuel. Sparks from these kindled flames on other buildings, until whole streets were ablaze and entire districts enveloped in one all-devouring conflagration.

By Tuesday, September 5th, the fire reached Smithfield, and the wind so fanned the flames that multitudes fled from their homes, leaving their possessions behind, some of them being driven into such difficult positions that it seemed almost impossible to find ways for flight. Nevertheless, only eight lives were sacrificed.

The Churches were among the most conspicuous buildings destroyed. The towers and spires stood for a time uplifted amid the smoke, then one after another tumbled down, and some of them falling upon naves and

transepts, hastened their destruction. Sacred edifices in which generations had worshipped were soon reduced to smouldering ruins. Only eleven Churches remained, and St. Bartholomew's Priory at Smithfield was one of them. The fire was roaring and the flames were raging close at hand, but this massive pile was not ignited, and seemed wonderfully preserved. The conflagration, which commenced on September 2nd, continued for three days and three nights.

In 1671 a monument was begun on one side of Fish Street, near to where the fire broke out, and was finished in 1677. It is a Doric Column, designed by Sir Christopher Wren, and cost £14,500. From the inscription on its north side we learn that the destruction consisted of eighty-nine Churches, the City Gates, Guild-hall, many public structures, hospitals, schools, libraries, a vast number of stately edifices, thirteen thousand two hundred dwelling houses, four hundred streets; of twenty-six wards it utterly devastated fifteen; and left eight others shattered, and half burnt.

"The ruins of the City covered four hundred

and thirty-six acres from the Tower by the Thames-side to the Temple Church, and from the North-East Gate along the City Wall to Holborn Bridge."

In the Diaries and Letters of Philip Henry, father of Matthew Henry, the Commentator, he speaks of "the famous and beautiful City" as "laying in its own rubbish." Hence, most of its present Churches are of little historical interest, from having been built after the fire, according to designs by Sir Christopher Wren.

The work of restoring St. Paul's Cathedral, which this renowned Architect was carrying out, contributed to its destruction. Scaffolding was all over it, even upon the central tower. This catching fire, the woodwork inside the Nave was ignited, and the entire building was soon enwrapped in flames. Capitals and stone carvings from Old St. Paul's may be seen lying around the present Cathedral, which formerly adorned one of the grandest Sanctuaries ever reared for Christian Worship.

It was at this juncture that Rev. Theophilus Gale appeared on the scene, and became a

centre of interest in connection with the Independent Church from the Abbey. After his ejection from the establishment at the Restoration he was received into the family of Lord Wharton, at Woburn, in Buckinghamshire, and appointed tutor to his two sons, Thomas and Godwin. His Lordship was a Puritan of considerable note, and a Member of the Westminster Assembly. He was also most active against the King in Parliament, and was brought face to face with him at the Battle of Worcester. While leading his regiment in the deadly strife his Majesty was watching its progress from the Tower of the Cathedral. He was very devoted to the Commonwealth, and his services were rewarded by an Earldom.

Lord Wharton was in constant association with the persecuted Ministers and made his house a refuge for them. He often paid their fines, and befriended them in many ways. The Countess, too, was a decided Nonconformist, and a most pious lady. At length he was sent to the Tower for challenging the legality of the Long Parliament under Charles II., but afterwards released.

He then took John Howe as his companion, and they travelled together on the Continent. While there this eminent Divine sometimes conversed with the Prince of Orange. He also called on him as the bearer of an address from the Dissenting Members of Parliament. The Prince in return received him in England after he ascended the throne.

When Lord Wharton had decided not to send his sons to either of the Universities he arranged with the Rev. Theophilus Gale to accompany them to a celebrated Seminary at Caen, in Normandy.

When studying at Oxford Mr. Gale had collected materials for his great work, of which we have spoken, "The Court of the Gentiles." Before leaving this country he entrusted a desk, containing his manuscripts, and other effects, to the care of an intimate friend. In 1665 he returned with his two pupils to England, and again stayed at their father's house. At length he decided to settle in London, and while journeying thither became a surprised and troubled spectator of the great fire. He saw the flames leaping up the towers and circling round the spires of

City Churches, even enveloping St. Paul's Cathedral.

He probably preached in some of these Churches before being expelled from "the Establishment." From his eminence at Oxford it is almost certain he had done so. These were made specially sacred by the Ministers who also suffered ejection occupying their pulpits, and appealing from them to crowds of plague-terrified people. Now multitudes were seen again rushing into these Churches for safety, only to be driven out of them by the spreading conflagration.

Mr. Gale was terribly affected by what he saw. He showed great concern for the safety of the people, and at the same time was anxious about his friend and the manuscripts entrusted to his care. Many precious records then perished, even the Reports of the Westminster Assembly. The character of its debates and the nature of its transactions were only preserved in the notes of one of its members. And Gale's great work, which had cost him years of labour, nearly shared the same fate. Thousands of carts, and all imaginable kinds of vehicles, blocked the

thoroughfares, as others, creaking beneath their loads, were being drawn to places of safety. Was the desk containing his precious manuscripts in any of them ?

His anxiety was increased on learning that his friend's house had been destroyed, but on meeting him his distress was relieved. Mr. Gale, when hearing that a considerable part of his effects was saved, eagerly asked about his own desk. "Why truly," replied his friend, "that is saved too, and by a very singular accident. It stood in my counting-house, the contents of which were being thrown into a cart; I thought there was still something wanting to make up a load, and in an instant, casting my eyes upon your desk, in it went with the rest, and you may have it returned when you please." That desk contained Theophilus Gale's manuscript of "The Court of the Gentiles," which was thus saved for the edification of the Church and the Instruction of the World.

It is uncertain as to how long the Independents were at St. Bartholomew's Meeting-house. The Presbyterians are said to have taken possession of it "towards the end of

Charles II.'s reign." Hence, it would appear that the Independents must have worshipped there more than twenty years. Mr. Rowe occupied its pulpit only "as the rigour of the times would allow." His prominence brought the severest persecutions upon him. Mr. Theophilus Gale was most likely one of the occasional preachers of whom Wilson speaks. If so, he may have joined Mr. Rowe, who was left alone in the Pastorate during the plague, after the great fire was over. He would thus be his assistant prior to the removal of the Church to Holborn.

It was to the oversight of this Church, which had come through plague and fire, that he was called as Co-Pastor in conjunction with Mr. Rowe. Whether he had been previously invited to this position which led him to decide to remain in London, or was asked to undertake its duties after his arrival, we have no means of deciding. These Ministers at length settled together just outside the fire zone at Baker's Court Meeting-house.

Though the origin of this meeting-place is unknown, its earlier history stands out with interesting distinctness. It existed before the

plague, and many to whom it had become sacred because of personal service and worship therein were carried away by that dreadful scourge, and some who were left were doubtless scattered by the fire. The very streets where they lived became heaps of smoking ruins. They were homeless and impoverished. The Church members, being thus reduced in numbers by the plague and driven away by the fire, would feel too feeble to maintain Christian worship and work. Hence, the building may have been used only occasionally, and kept in existence by the struggles of those who clung to it as a sacred place.

The Rev. John Rowe, while Minister at Bartholomew Close, must have witnessed many harrowing scenes. The surviving Church members would need much practical sympathy before they could be rallied, or any meetings be held. A considerable proportion of them were doubtless compelled to settle at a distance, with no prospect of returning to the City.

In the course of time this Church from the Abbey moved from Bartholomew Close to Baker's Court, and it is probable that after

Mr. Rowe was joined by Mr. Gale he gave himself mostly to Pastoral visitation, leaving preaching mainly to his colleague. The scattered flock would look for shepherding from him who had known them so well and shared their many trials. He was better able to bring them together again, and encourage them than one who was newly entering upon his duties. That Mr. Gale generally conducted the Services seems favoured by Wilson's record, which speaks of the meeting-house as specially associated with his name. Writing of it as existing nearly a century ago, he says: "It may be mentioned as the preaching place of the very learned Theophilus Gale."

While Mr. Gale saw the fire when approaching London from its north side, he must have met multitudes hurrying to places of safety. The sick and dying were being carried away on litters surrounded by excited crowds. Such as were young and strong were helping the aged and infirm to escape. The highest prices were demanded for carts and drays, for coaches and horses. Countrymen exacted the utmost from the citizens to convey them and their possessions to a distance. Many from among

all classes were bowed down beneath burdens of precious things they were eager to preserve. Numbers were huddled together without shelter in the depth and dead of the cold autumn nights. Evelyn speaks of as many as 200,000 people lying about at Islington and Highgate, beside the goods which they had brought away from the fire. Homeless and hungry, the sufferers sought shelter behind their belongings, exposed to serious perils. These perils could by no means be disregarded. They were both real and terrible; for flakes of fire had fallen upon a number of barges in the river which consumed the merchandise they contained, and burned them down to the water's level. In several places the Thames seemed on fire, and immense volumes of smoke rising therefrom intercepted the view of the great burning London.

What if the few possessions of the people should also be ignited, and they be thus deprived of articles they were seeking to save, while they themselves were driven farther afield by conflagration all around them! These troubles would cause them

intense anxiety as they conversed excitedly about present dangers and coming difficulties. Some of these would be members of the Abbey Church. It was not far from either Smithfield or Holborn across London Bridge into Southwark.

The King and his Council issued "A PROCLAMATION," appealing to the country to come to the help of these distressed Citizens. Greatly to his credit, Charles II. exerted himself, in company with his brother, to arrest the progress of the fire. He made a round twice each day, and sometimes for many hours together, seeking to alleviate the abounding miseries. The people were equally noble in helping each other. Evelyn says that while going among them there was no asking for relief. Though bewildered and desperate, acts of charity were done on all sides, and marvellous kindness was shown, in surprising ways, to the suffering multitudes.

From scattered and almost broken-hearted members the Church had again to be gathered. Its Ministers needed stout hearts, inspired self-reliance, and unshaken confidence in God. And how clearly the grandeurs of their

characters shone forth in the presence of this appalling calamity! They showed no shrinking from the terrible task, but a calm, resolute going forward, regardless of difficulty because of manifest duty. But what were the effects of such severe ordeals upon Mr. Rowe and his noble colleague, Mr. Gale? They evidently expended themselves to exhaustion. The one died at the early age of 52 years and the other at 53 years, within a very short time of each other.

Many days must have elapsed before the smoking ruins had sufficiently cooled to enable any one to move about. Evelyn speaks of clambering over heaps of rubbish which were so hot as to burn the soles of his shoes. Many landmarks had disappeared. Streets and lanes, once well-known, were either blocked up or blotted out. The distress of the unsheltered multitudes was aggravated by the belief that Papists had been the Incendiaries, as was afterwards proved before the House of Commons. This belief was inscribed on "the Monument," but was cut away in the Reign of King James, "restored in deep characters during that of William III., and again

erased a few years ago by a vote of the Corporation."

The excitement was intensified by a rumour that the French were coming to murder and pillage the people. While the hearts of the women were quaking and trembling, the men were calling each other to arms, with a great shout, and showing a furious eagerness to defend their families and possessions even unto death.

But as Mr. Rowe and Mr. Gale were zealously seeking to rally the scattered members of the Abbey Church, there was another ejected Minister caring for the crowds which needed to hear of Christ, who deserves all possible honour. The Rev. Nathaniel Vincent, M.A., of Magdalen College, Oxford, came from an heroic stock. His father, the Rev. John Vincent, was so driven about by persecutors that "no two of his numerous family were born in the same county." His eldest Brother Thomas, as we have seen, showed a surprising devotion during the plague. Then he himself proved that he was not the least in a noble succession.

Wood, who was no friend to the Puritans,

says in his "Athanæ": "Mr. Vincent is a person of smarter, more brisk and florid parts than most of his dull and sluggish fraternity can pretend to be; of a facetious and jolly humour, and is a considerable scholar." He combined the jovial with the serious in his character. He was a Minister who commended Religion alike by his cheerfulness and his courage. But he took life seriously, and lived most heroically. He would not allow his voice to be silenced after he was ejected from the Rectory of Langley Marsh. During the fire nothing could daunt him in his work. He stood up in moral grandeur of character, preaching to thousands where it was possible for them to congregate, and multitudes were converted to God.

Such work in itself was sufficiently painful and difficult, and yet he had to suffer much persecution when doing it. A meeting-place was built for him at St. Thomas's, Southwark, which has since disappeared. The Soldiers sometimes took possession of it to prevent him from preaching. On one occasion four musketeers were placed around his pulpit, while he was dragged from it by the hair,

But though hurried from the building, the people rushed upon the Soldiers and rescued him. He was often fined and imprisoned, and at length taken secretly to the gate-house at Westminster, to be kept there during His Majesty's pleasure. His wife, however, secured his liberation, and he continued to minister to large congregations.

Judge Pierce once entered the meeting-house, and ordered him in the King's name to come down out of the pulpit; but he said he had been commanded to stand there by the King of Kings; and he continued to preach to the assembled crowds. He was probably the most harassed among his persecuted Brethren. He died on June 22, 1697, aged 53 years. His portrait can be seen at Dr. Williams's Library, now in Gordon Square.

There were several Nonconformist Chapels that escaped the general conflagration. One of these, as we have seen, was Baker's Court Meeting-house, where Mr. Rowe and Mr. Gale afterwards ministered. The inflammable character of many of the buildings may be judged by the quaint timbered houses, with gabled roofs, still standing in Holborn. They

enable us to recall the antiquated character of these early places of worship.

Just below these was Fetter Lane Meeting-house. "It consisted of four rooms opening into each other, and had seventeen pews with divers benches." This Chapel was forcibly taken possession of by the Episcopalians, whose own Churches had perished. They used it as long as it suited their purpose, after which it was returned to its rightful owners.

In like manner the New Broad Street Meeting-house was taken over by the clergy. It had been erected for Rev. Thomas Vincent, who laboured so zealously during the plague. This robbery was sanctioned by law; but the Chapel was afterwards recovered, and Mr. Vincent continued to preach in it until his death. Such clergymen had strange ideas of "pure and undefiled Religion," in thinking they could offer a worship acceptable unto God in buildings stolen from nobler and holier men than themselves.

As the scenes of Mr. Vincent's preaching to the crowds were not far from Baker's Court Chapel, some of his converts probably rallied

there, and were gathered into the Church. The Pastoral work of Mr. Rowe, and the preaching of Mr. Gale, would draw them into its fellowship. As we look at the shops still standing in Holborn which were formerly inhabited houses, we can picture thousands passing them from Sunday to Sunday, many of whom would be wending their way either to Baker's Court or Fetter Lane Meeting-house, which were on either side of them.

These Co-Pastors, suffering from a similar ejection, must have incited them to sympathetic co-operation, while the sorrows of the people would give to their teaching a most practical and helpful character. The desolations around must also have made their appeals more effective, as Congregations had reminders wherever they went of the perishable nature of all earthly possessions.

Though there may be no records of the re-assembling of the Members of the Abbey Church after the fire, their first meetings would be memorable ones. When they came together as the plague ceased they had to comfort each other amid the sorrows of bereavement, and to offer mutual encourage-

ments in view of their sadly diminished numbers. Many with whom they had enjoyed Christian fellowship were gone, and while their bodies might not be far away, they were perhaps unable to trace them so as to find a little relief in shedding tears upon their graves.

Now help was needed in consequence of their losses of this world's goods. Some of them would scarcely know where to lay their heads, or to find food and raiment for their families. Their impoverishment was probably recognisable in their appearance. But from what is known of their spirit as Church Members, the very conditions of their re-assembling would call forth something of that *voluntary* Christian Socialism which was shown on the Day of Pentecost. They perhaps tried to minister to each other's wants as every man had need.

Though they had escaped from a burning fiery furnace, One like unto the Son of Man was among them. His Own benevolence would present such an appeal as to incite them to imitate it, until their souls overflowed in practical kindness one towards

another. Such sympathies must have bound them together and contributed to their spiritual power. Though buildings had been burned their Church was not consumed. Its members emerged from the fire purified and refined and animated by a life which seemed aflame as with the very Light of God.

XI

A NOBLE DEACON

FROM the formation of the Independent Church in Westminster Abbey until its last Service in Haberdashers' Hall it must have had many Deacons "of whom the world was not worthy." Their names do not appear in ecclesiastical histories, but are written in the Book of Life. The career of one of these commands special attention. His name was—

WILLIAM CROMWELL,

a grandson of Oliver, the Protector. Some believe his ancestry is traceable backward to the year 1000, though this is discredited by Carlyle. In any case, the patriotic services of many of his forefathers are intertwined with the nation's history.

Oliver, the eldest son of Sir Henry Crom-

well, was knighted, and inherited the family estate of Hinchingbrook, and gave King James, when on his progress from Scotland to take possession of the Throne of England, the grandest feast ever provided by a subject for his Sovereign. He had great wealth, and was a zealous Royalist.

It is noticeable how often the name "Oliver" appears as a patronymic in the family pedigree. Many who bore it were prominent in the service of their country from the time of the Norman Conquest. The great Oliver himself, when referring to his genealogy in a speech before Parliament on September 12, 1654, said, "I was by birth a gentleman, living in neither any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity."

As he was brought into association with the Abbey Independent Church from its commencement, and his great-grandson was connected with it towards its close, it will be interesting to learn some things that were said about him by his descendant.

This descendant once showed a paper to his pastor, Dr. Gibbons, drawn up by a person who knew the great Protector

intimately, in which he spoke of him "as having such a tender sensibility of spirit that if an account was given him of a distressed case, the narrative would draw tears from his eyes."

He also told Dr. Gibbons that when the daughter of Sir Francis Russell was about to marry Sir Henry Cromwell, the second son of Oliver, she had entertained a very ill opinion of the latter; but that when she became a member of his family "all her prejudice was removed, and changed into a most affectionate esteem for him, as the most amiable of parents."

The true spirit of Cromwell was shown when he attended Divine Service in the great City Church of Glasgow. The Rev. William Derham was the preacher, and called him an usurper to his face. Oliver invited his reverend accuser to visit him in the evening, when they supped together in great harmony. He then told his guest that he knew how much he and his Brethren disliked him, but said "they might assure themselves that if any of the Stuart Line came to the throne they would find their little fingers heavier

than his loins." This, indeed, proved to be true in the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution.

It is certain that Milton would know Oliver's character as no other public man could do; and that character is vividly portrayed in the well-known picture in which the Protector is represented as dictating to his Secretary the letter by which he terrorised the Duke of Savoy, and compelled him to stop the persecution of Protestants in Piedmont in the year 1655.

While his Secretary, Milton spoke of him as "noted for nothing more than the cultivation of pure religion and integrity of life." "He was notably a rugged, firm, enthusiastic, sincere, and affectionate man. Of all his qualities his will was the strongest, and next to this his family affections. Ecclesiastically, he was an Independent, but he never forced Independency upon the nation. He was willing to tolerate even Jews—a thing at that time almost unheard of in Christendom—and he allowed Archbishop Usher to preach within a stone's throw of Whitehall."

The most godly Ministers of the Commonwealth were Oliver's Chaplains, and the accounts of his association with them testify to the purity of his motives and the nobility of his life. William Cromwell, therefore, had at least one religious ancestor. There was only a single generation between him and the Lord Protector. His father was Henry, Oliver's second son, who was extremely beloved by the English and the Army when he was Lord Deputy at College Green, in Dublin. He was spoken of as "truly a great man, and might pass for a great man in those great days." He remained in Ireland until his brother Richard relinquished the Protectorate.

William Cromwell was born in Cripplegate Parish on April 24, 1693. There seemed to be a rebound in him from his ancestors, many of whom were so strenuous in the public service. He shrank into private life, and is unknown to history. He was an estimable Christian gentleman, and resided in chambers at Gray's Inn during the greater part of his life, having been intended for the Law like Oliver himself. After his

marriage to Mary, widow of Thomas Westby, Esq., he lived at Barking for about two years, but on her decease he returned to London.

Dr. Gibbons was his Pastor for nearly thirty years, and a frequent visitor at his house. He knew him intimately, and spoke of him as a Christian indeed, spiritually-minded and, though sensitive, yet patient in the midst of very heavy afflictions. Incidentally he gives an insight into his home life, and says he often "found him with some good book of the Divines *of the last age* in his hands or on his table."

He was a lover of Puritan literature, and of the works of those renowned Ministers who were so closely associated with his great ancestor. Some of them would be sermons to which the Protector had listened on important public occasions. The effect of reading these would be to carry William Cromwell's mind backward to memorable events which stand out so clearly in history. It would also enable him to compass that grand conception of a Divine Kingdom which the Puritan Independents had striven so nobly to make a reality in this country.

The writers of these works doubtless seemed to live again while he was studying them, challenging him to unceasing devotion to the same holy cause. A clear vision of what might yet be accomplished would animate his faithfulness to his Church, and arouse in him something of that self-sacrifice which made its earlier Members so illustrious. He must have felt that he owed it to their memories to emulate their devotion to its interests. But while he read Puritan works with feelings engendered by special relationships, he also studied them because of their intrinsic value. They were the writings of master minds, and have been made familiar to many through being reprinted. Some of their sermons were of great length, and an ancient copy of one of these appears in two different founts of type because the printer had not sufficient of one fount to enable him to publish it uniformly throughout.

Like many of his thoughtful compeers, William Cromwell was largely shut up to this class of literature. They were not then distracted and burdened by endless publications such as are now poured from the press,

and seem to demand attention almost every day. Having leisure for studying it, they assimilated its teachings until their minds became possessed by great governing principles, and their hearts were consumed by a passion for righteousness. Hence they embodied these in their characters, and translated them by their conduct. They, therefore, became strong for grappling with the great problems of their age and for ennobling the nation.

It must have been interesting in the olden days to see eager souls crowding around a Lectern on which an ancient Bible was chained, to listen to some person sufficiently educated to be able to read out its precious truths to them. It would be even more thrilling to hear the clandestine reading of the Scriptures. The writer once had the privilege of finding a portion of Epistles written on vellum, a part of which was in paraphrase, because the copyist had not the opportunity for copying in full. This precious manuscript was pronounced by British Museum and other experts to have come down from Reformation days under Wycliffe. It had probably

belonged to some of the Lollards, and may have been treasured by men who were once imprisoned or suffered martyrdom for the truth. Such copies were sometimes hidden between folding stools, and brought out when it seemed safe to read them in the family, or to friends and neighbours.

In looking through thousands of old books, with broken ancient bindings, while searching for the materials compiled in this history, the author has been struck by the succession of names inside many of their covers, on fly-leaves and title-pages, with dates appended. These indicate how their earlier owners valued and carefully preserved them, that they might be handed down to their successors. As a result many original copies of important works have been saved from destruction. There are also comments, in the older hand-writing, upon their contents, which show how their teachings were appreciated. "The Word of the Lord was precious in those days!"

They estimated such literature so highly that, like this descendant of Cromwell's, they had it always at hand. Their ideas of its

value were formed from personal acquaintance with it. The ephemeral and the sensational are sought to-day. Bookstalls and public libraries tell a sorry story of degenerate tastes and mental indolence. Volumes representing the travail of great souls make moral giants such as the age needs for elevating the nation. Though some of these may shrink from publicity, they often wield much power in obscure spheres. William Cromwell was a constant student of Puritan literature, and Dr. Gibbons, speaking of it, says that it was "never excelled for deep penetration, spirituality, Christian experience, and savour."

Though the Church had lost the prestige it enjoyed in the time of his great ancestor, William Cromwell was its steadfast supporter, even when it assembled only in a hall. He became a member about the year 1722, and was probably a worshipper before being received into fellowship. His connection with the Church extended over fifty years, running backward through twenty-one years of Mr. Wright's pastorate, and forward into Dr. Gibbons' ministry during twenty-one years.

He was also a deacon for more than three

decades, and honoured his office by refusing to sacrifice principle for his own enriching. He was urged to join the Established Church as a qualification for having some special provision made for him, but preferred to maintain a conscience void of offence, and remained a convinced Nonconformist. He showed the spirit of Stephen, the first Deacon, who sacrificed himself in surrender to his Lord. He continued to worship at Haberdashers' Hall until he died, on July 9, 1772, in the eightieth year of his age.

There were several members of Cromwell families, who passed away just before William, whose names are contained in the genealogies, nearly all of whom resided in London. Several of his contemporaries lived in, and about, the City. If the connections of the former could be traced, they might be found as having been staunch supporters of the Church right back to the time of its meeting in Westminster Abbey. And could the descendants of the latter be discovered, it may be seen that they helped to sustain its interests while in Haberdashers' Hall.

Dr. Gibbons preached Deacon Cromwell's

funeral sermon from the words—"Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him," and offered "sincere and cordial prayers" for his relations. This discourse was published in the following year, under the title of "The Character and Blessedness of the Righteous," to which "the speech delivered at his interment" was appended, on July 15, 1772, from which these interesting particulars have been taken.

From the whole of Dr. Gibbons' elaborate sermon it is evident that he had William Cromwell's character and career in view. It was closed by offering earnest prayers for "all the survivors of the family," that "while the multitude of the redeemed and saved is increasing above, the Saviour's standard shall not be deserted below; but instead of the fathers shall come up the children that shall be unto the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."

While at the grave Dr. Gibbons spoke of Mr. Cromwell's relations as "in genteel circumstances, and truly deserving and ornamental in their characters and stations." At the same time, the Doctor said concerning his

Deacon, that "having attained to the age so justly styled in Scripture the season of labour and sorrow, there is nothing distressing or to be lamented when the righteous pass away." He added that there was "no just cause to weep over the grave of their departed brother, but rather cause for rejoicing, because he had lived so nobly through so many years. These were reasons for going from his grave thankful for the life he had spent in the service of the Christian Church."

XII

CONQUERING AND TO CONQUER

IN its later years the Abbey Church had six Ministers who exercised their ministry successively in two halls, and it should be interesting to trace its career in connection with them until its close. No buildings were specially erected for Christian work and worship. During its early history it was difficult to secure sites in the City, and the resources of persecuted people would be sufficiently taxed in sustaining their own organisations. The Church from the Abbey seems to have settled down in these halls, so that its members did not feel the need of building costly meeting-houses. In this, as in many other cases, the greater part of its existence was spent in them.

The first was Gilders' Hall, which was in a

better position than Baker's Court Chapel. Though a small structure, with only one gallery, it was spoken of as "a handsome brick building situated on the east side, and towards the north end of Basinghall Street." It was erected in the year 1681.

Previous to the Revolution it was occupied for half the Sunday by the Rev. George Griffith, whose name appears with that of Thomas Manton and John Rowe, in commending the published works of Rev. William Strong, the first Independent Minister at the Abbey. He was well known and gathered a congregation together after the great fire of London.

When Mr. Thomas Rowe removed to this hall with the Church, it could be occupied for only half the day. About the year 1710 the former congregation scattered, and the Abbey Church members were able to use it for the whole of each Sabbath. The Rev. John Foxon settled as Pastor there in 1706. He was spoken of as most painstaking in sermon preparation and powerful in the pulpit. He remained at Gilders' Hall until 1723.

The most interesting Pastorate as serving

the purposes of this history is that of the Rev. Robert Wright. About ten years after he was chosen Minister the Church removed to its last settled home at Haberdashers' Hall. This hall was first let to Mr. Stretton, in 1677, as a Presbyterian meeting-house. Having been ejected from Petworth, in Sussex, he gathered a congregation which worshipped in it for sixty years. The Church became extinct in 1734. The building was spoken of as small and inconvenient, oblong in form, and having three galleries of unequal dimensions. It was situated in Stainers' Lane, in Cheapside, so named because of paper-staining carried on in the district.

This Hall was then taken by the Abbey Church, and Mr. Wright exercised his ministry there, surrounded by busy industries, until he died. In its three removals its members kept in near proximity to their first settled meeting-house at Bartholomew Close. After leaving Westminster, it became essentially a City Church. Mr. Wright being in feeble health, his congregation showed much affectionate solicitude concerning him. His Church is spoken of as "having engaged

the assistance of some Ministers in the solemn duty of Intercession, Prayer, and Supplication, upon his account."

At the last Sacrament but one before his death he took special farewell of its members in a solemn and most affecting manner. After his decease the Rev. Thomas Hall preached his Funeral Sermon from the words, "We have this Treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us," chosen with evident reference to the Pastor's ill-health. This Discourse was published by request, and, with some enlargements, extends to sixty-seven pages.

Before referring to this Sermon, Wilson speaks of "the Church Books belonging to the Society" as corroborating the account of its origin in the Abbey. They were evidently in existence when he wrote, and he probably had access to them for the particulars he recorded.

When Mr. Hall was preparing the Funeral Sermon of Mr. Wright, the Church would be known among other Churches for its distinguished origin and history. He also may

have searched these Church Books while seeking information suitable for the Service he was about to conduct, or would learn what was necessary from the officials while in consultation with them. After speaking of Mr. Wright's renowned predecessors, he adds in a footnote: "These were Mr. Strong, author of a Discourse upon the Two Covenants, under whose Ministry this Church was gathered. He was its Pastor when it used to meet in Westminster Abbey; and on his death, in the year 1654, Mr. John Rowe was Pastor there, who died in 1677; and was succeeded by the learned Mr. Theophilus Gale, and Mr. Samuel Lee; and afterwards by his Son, Mr. Thomas Rowe, who died in 1705."

This extract is important, because it carries the history of the Church back into Westminster Abbey, in confirmation of the previous chapters, and was used after addressing its members on the death of one of its beloved Pastors.

These Books would have been invaluable had the author been able to trace them. He has sought for them in all quarters where it was likely they could be found. He has also

inserted paragraphs in several denominational journals and circulars inquiring for them, but without result. The fear is they have fallen into private hands and perished.

If they could be recovered they might tell us many things of thrilling interest about the Commonwealth, with which this Church's existence was vitally bound up. They would probably cover the whole time of its meeting in the Abbey, and give vivid accounts of the experiences of Members during the plague and the fire. The entries in such ancient books were often made with the greatest exactitude. The deacons were rigid in discipline and in the management of affairs, and kept the records of meetings with the utmost care, which were subsequently confirmed by the Members.

Many belonging to this Church were men of culture, and being so largely connected with the Army and the Government, their Minutes may refer to startling changes in the National life and their surprising developments. Some of them were leading forces in working out that Revolution which lifted their country on to a higher moral level,

and contributed to much of its greatness to-day.

It has hitherto been seen that the Ministers of this Church were scholarly men, having been educated at one or other of the older Universities. In later times some of them became Principals and Tutors in Dissenting Academies, such as that at Islington, over which the Rev. Thomas Doolittle, M.A., presided, and from which the Rev. Thomas Vincent, M.A., went forth to preach to the people perishing from the plague.

Mention has also been made of that at Newington Green, of which the Rev. Theophilus Gale was Principal, and the Rev. Thomas Rowe his successor. The last two Ministers of the Abbey Church were connected with the Congregational College at Homerton, founded in the year 1730. The celebrated Dr. Thomas Gibbons was chosen by its members in 1743, and combined the duties of "visiting Tutor" with those of Pastor. Wilson gives a list of forty-six of his publications, and as some of these are in two or three volumes, he was evidently a most prolific writer.

Among his works will be found his translation of the Latin Epitaphs of the Ejected Ministers, and a striking poem in honour of those who were silenced by the Act of Uniformity. He also wrote, during the thirty-sixth year of his Pastorate, the Memoirs of the Rev. Isaac Watts, D.D., and thought it an honour that a predecessor of his had been the Doctor's Tutor and Minister.

There is one interesting item in connection with his Professorial duties. He brought out a book entitled, "Rhetoric; or, a View of its Principal Tropes and Figures in their Original Powers, with a Variety of Rules to escape Errors and Blemishes and attain Propriety and Elegance in Composition." His own Ministry would therefore appear to have been accompanied by those graces of diction and delivery which increase the effectiveness of public speaking.

His sermons were not Theological Essays, more suited to the Professor's Chair than the Pulpit. He sought to improve such events as "the Tremendous Earthquake at Lisbon" and "the Death of King George II."

His own end came suddenly, but he was

found ready. Having spent the whole of February 17, 1785, in his room until eight o'clock in the evening, he walked to Hoxton Square to read the newspaper. While in the parlour of the coffee-house there "he had a stroke, and was found with the candle out, on the floor in the darkness." He was removed to his home, and, while lingering, said to a friend, "All I am waiting for is to close my eyes, and see God." He died on February 22, 1785, aged 64 years.

His body was taken from his house to the Table pew in Haberdashers' Hall, and from thence to its burial. His Funeral Sermon was preached by Dr. B. Davies, and his gifts and graces are recorded on his tomb in Bunhill Fields. The preacher said the Church was "not without a pleasing prospect of a Successor, and urged its Members to pray for Divine guidance in the choice they might make."

His reference was to Mr. Brooksbank, who was born at Thornton, near Bradford, in Yorkshire, and had entered Homerton College in 1780. Its Members must have felt that he possessed most promising gifts, to invite him,

as a student, to follow his distinguished tutor. Probably Dr. Gibbons, while contemplating retirement through increasing infirmities, pointed him out as a desirable successor. When Elijah was about to be taken away, Elisha went on with him until he was carried up into heaven.

Mr. Brooksbank was ordained in September of the same year. He was distinguished during his long ministry for diligence, fidelity, and benevolence, and is spoken of as beloved by all who knew him. In his later life he read the Bible through annually. Towards its close he preached only on Sunday mornings, and lectured at Broad Street Meeting-house and other places in the evening. He died on April 19, 1825, at the age of 63 years. Having prepared a discourse, which was never delivered, Dr. Collyer preached his Funeral Sermon from the same text, "Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus" (Col. i. 28). He was the last Pastor of the Abbey Church. His body was buried in his own family vault by the venerable Doctor

at Bunhill Fields, and it was fitting that it should lay where the remains of several of his renowned predecessors rest, which must ever be a sacred spot to true servants of God.

The following table, mainly copied from Wilson's "History and Antiquities of Dissenting Meeting-houses," giving the names of its Ministers and the dates of their ministries, will be found completed :—

Ministers' Names.	As Pastors.		As Assistants.	
	From	To	From	To
William Strong, M.A. ...	1650	1654		
John Rowe, M.A.... ...	1654	1677		
Seth Wood, M.A.... ...			1650	1660
Theophilus Gale, M.A. ...	1666	1678		
Samuel Lee, M.A. ...			1677	1679
Thomas Rowe	1678	1705		
John Foxon	1705	1723		
David Jennings, D.D. ...			1716	1718
Henry Francis			1718	1723
Robert Wright	1723	1743		
Thomas Gibbons, D.D. ...	1743	1785		
Joseph Brooksbank ...	1785	1825		

This Table shows that the average length of each Pastorate was about twenty-two

years, which was creditable to the Church and to those called to its oversight in such serious and anxious times. A similar average of the service rendered by its Assistant Ministers cannot be given, seeing they did not continue to the end.

Whenever the Pastorate became vacant a new Minister was elected in the course of a few months. As one died, or removed, his successor was chosen in the same year. In all the literature concerning the Church there is not the slightest hint of any disagreement among its Members. There are many evidences of a prevailing harmony between the people and their Pastors. The preceding table shows that the last two Pastorates were by far the longest. The earlier Ministers were worn out prematurely by exacting demands in troublous days. But Dr. Gibbons had the care of the Church for forty-two years, and Mr. Brooksbank for forty years. There is no mention of it in the lists of Churches that were published in the *Congregational Magazine* in 1829.

The Registers of its Births and Baptisms, now in the custody of the Registrar-

General at Somerset House, extend only from 1785 to 1825. Such Registers were often kept at the end of Church Books, and the author hoped that he might find these books there, but was again doomed to disappointment. A new Register appears to have been provided when Mr. Brooksbank commenced his Ministry. It contains 662 names, and, with two exceptions, the signature of Joseph Brooksbank is appended to all of them, showing that the people so loved their Pastor as to have nearly all their children baptized by him.

The first name in the book is one of some interest. As we have seen, William Cromwell, grandson of the great Oliver, was connected with the Church for more than half a century. Dr. Gibbons also spoke of some other of his descendants as attending his services. The Cromwell tradition centred in these, and lingered in the congregation; and the first child baptized by Mr. Brooksbank received "Cromwell" as a Christian name. The Register reads, "Henry Cromwell, son of John Field, and Esther his wife, of the Parish of Christ Church, Cripplegate, in the

City of London." They were possibly related to some of the Cromwell families.

The last Registers are pathetic, and point unmistakably to the end of the Church and to the close of Mr. Brooksbank's Ministry. He was in failing health and unequal to meeting the demands of a declining City Cause. His name appears towards the last on December 24, 1812. After this the Registers are signed by Joseph *Shrimpton* Brooksbank, from November 14, 1824, to March 22, 1825. Then another name is recorded which apparently was not entered up in its proper place. It is dated December 24, 1814, and signed by Joseph Brooksbank himself. The beloved Pastor's name is, therefore, appended to the first and last Register in the book. He died on April 19, 1825.

The Rev. Joseph Shrimpton Brooksbank's name is found in the list of deceased Congregational Ministers given in the "Year Book" of 1891; from which we learn that he died at Edmonton in 1829, at the age of 37 years, after seven years' Ministry. He was probably the son of the last Pastor of

the Abbey Church. While at Edmonton he most likely went over to Haberdashers' Hall to conduct Baptismal Services, and possibly had to do with settling up the Church's affairs. At the end of the Baptismal Registers there is this suggestive record:

"I, Joseph Shrimpton Brooksbank, Executor of the late Rev^d. Joseph Brooksbank, deposit this volume of a Register of Baptisms in the Library of the late Rev^d. Dr. Daniel Williams, Red Cross St., Cripplegate, the Church of which he was Pastor having dissolved.

"December 29th, 1826.

"JOHN COATES, Librarian."

It is clear throughout that this Church had lived an ever enlarging life. The earlier Academies over which some of its Ministers presided were merged in Congregational Colleges, and in one of these Dr. Gibbons was for many years a tutor. His long life-work was done as Pastor of the Abbey Church and Professor at Homerton College, in which many eminent Ministers were trained. In due course this College was merged in New

College, which for more than half a century has been sending most capable men into the Churches, the Chairs of other Colleges, and the principal Denominational positions. In its Historical Library there are several pictures of "Homerton," as well as portraits of its Principals and Professors and much of its literature.

There are also two portraits of Dr. Gibbons. The one is an engraving pasted inside a fine edition of Wilson's "Antiquities of Dissenting Meeting-houses," and shows him in the prime of life. The other is a framed miniature, taken, or copied, in the same year that he died. It represents him in a heavy coat, wearing an enormous wig and a cocked hat, looking intently through a large pair of spectacles, and writing at his study table. This portrait might be taken for caricature but for the inscription on it, "*Memoria justi beata.*"

These relics serve to show the extent to which saintly and scholarly men lived themselves into Denominational literature and institutions, and how their influence has gone out through new channels, reproducing itself

in ever changing and multiplying forms. Dr. Gibbons, during his long Ministry, gave many students the benefit of his pulpit and pastoral experiences from the Professor's Chair, and the Churches are still receiving its blessings all over the country.

The Life of this Church also spread to the Colonies. It has been seen how numbers of its Members returned from the Continent to foster its life in the Abbey. Some of these were probably driven to America. It is computed that 20,000 refugees had departed by the year 1649, and believed that Oliver Cromwell was very nearly sailing with a contingent of them from the Thames. These Pilgrim Fathers sought beyond the Atlantic that freedom to worship God so cruelly denied them in their own country.

But they cherished such love for their native land that they called settlements and towns after places where their ancestors lived and were buried, and in which they had reared their own families. Many busy centres still bear the names these Pilgrim Fathers gave them, which are so familiar to ourselves. They even took seeds with them, that when

planted in a far distant soil the beauty and fragrance of the flowers might remind them of their old homes and the gardens they once cultivated, amid scenes to which they would never return.

But those thus expatriated had successors and followers in this country who were imbued with their spirit and concerned for the religious welfare of other peoples. In his "History of the Free Churches" Skeats says it ought never to be forgotten that it was the Independents of the Commonwealth who "first conceived the Duty of Foreign Missionary Effort."

He also tells us that on July 27, 1648, "an Ordinance was passed in Parliament constituting a Corporation under the Title of 'The President and Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England.'" He also adds that the preamble of this Ordinance recites "that the Commons of England assembled in Parliament, having received intelligence that the Heathens of New England were beginning to call on the Name of the Lord, felt bound to assist in such work." The Independents were then in power, and

"this Society was the first Missionary Society formed in England, and was the parent of the present Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts."

That the Ministers and Members of the Abbey Church were connected with this mission is evident from their personal devotion to its interests, and from their benefactions. As we have seen, the Rev. Seth Wood, M.A., who was Assistant Minister during the whole of his tenure in the Abbey, preached the Funeral Sermon of Sir William Armyne; and we find that this worthy Baronet's widow put forth much practical effort in propagating the Gospel among the American Indians. She is said to have founded three hospitals, which probably means almshouses. She died in the year 1676.

It has been shown, too, that the Rev. Theophilus Gale bequeathed the greater part of his valuable Library for Educational purposes in New England. This makes it clear that he was concerned for the Evangelisation of that country while he was Minister of the Abbey Church.

The Rev. Samuel Lee, M.A., who had been associated with him as Professor and Pastor, shared his sympathies for its peoples. In seeking to serve them, he sailed for their country to preach the Gospel to them, and probably "at his own charges."

As this missionary enterprise was inaugurated and carried out when the Independents were supreme in Parliament, while one of the Abbey Church Ministers gave his personal services and another devoted his resources to it, we may be sure that members of the Church would, like Lady Armyne, give the Society their generous support. It is probable that many of them co-operated in its Service, could their names be discovered and their work traced. Members of Parliament and Ministers of the Church would not be left alone, in those heroic days, in such a God-like enterprise.

But the Abbey Church not only showed concern about preaching the Gospel in this country, and for Evangelising the Colonies; its members were also devoted to Foreign Missions. Among Ministers and Churches conspicuous in forming THE LONDON MIS-

sionary Society Mr. Brooksbank and his Church have pre-eminence. He was one of its Founders, and a resolute Defender of its Interests while it was overcoming prejudice and struggling into existence. Its early records abundantly testify to the zeal with which he served this Society, and to the vigorous efforts of those associated with him to promote its prosperity.

The first Sermon preached on its behalf was heard at Haberdashers' Hall, and the first Communion Service held in connection with it was observed there. For many years its Annual and other important Gatherings assembled in this meeting-place of the Abbey Church. Its constituents also congregated there for prayer, and for personal re-consecration for the conversion of the Heathen.

The Life which emanated from the Abbey continued to centre in this ejected Church, and, breaking out therefrom, it found new courses for its onflow, and ever widening and deepening channels for its vitalising and transforming power. Having moved from the historic centre of Ecclesiastical Association

to the mighty centre of Commercial Enterprise would seem suggestive of the work it was to attempt in the Nation as well as in the Church. The ramifications of its activities in the City, and its influence on Commerce, spread over so many years, cannot now be traced; but it is on record that throughout this Church's noble history it sent forth streams of spiritual life, which flowed to the ends of the Earth. This life went out, by means of various agencies, among many nations, and is still purifying and enriching the life of the world.

The Puritan Independency which had centralised expression in this Church also rendered great service to the nation. Though its grand attempt to make it into a Kingdom of God was not realised, and appeared to suffer collapse, the exalted aim brought the best blessings in its train. The enduring results are continuously enjoyed without being fully appreciated. Multitudes never think of whence they came, and some are traitors to their noble Puritan ancestors by deserting the cause these espoused at such great cost. That cause has, nevertheless, elevated the whole tone of

Society, welded the three kingdoms together, and insured a Constitutional, instead of an absolute, monarchy. It also secured the Protestant Succession to the Throne.

The mastery of the Seas, too, was then gained, which has enabled us to maintain our National Security, and to become Benefactors to oppressed peoples. Oliver Cromwell was the first to submit Naval estimates to Parliament, and content to begin with a modest £400,000. These estimates have increased to £35,000,000. The Protector's Fleet included fifty large vessels of the Line. Bishop Weldon, now Dean of Manchester, says: "The beginnings of the Imperial Spirit were to be found in men like Milton and Cromwell; and what a magnificent fact the British Empire has become!"

The Power of Britain is still trusted because it is so largely Puritan. Hence, oppressed Chiefs and Tribes ask for Protectorates, and the down-trodden look for safety under its Sovereignty. From the time of the Commonwealth there has been an immense extension of Empire, until it now encompasses 400,000,000 subjects and covers 12,000,000

square miles, which is more than one-fifth of the land surface of the globe.

This spirit of Puritan Independency still speaks in "the Nonconformist Conscience." It is wielding an immense power through "the Free Church Council" all over the land. Wrongs are being righted and tyrannies are tottering to their fall. It is morally emancipating the people, and will so transform them as to make this country a challenge, and an example, to every other nation.

It is sad patriotically, as well as religiously, that this Independent Church from Westminster Abbey should have been allowed to disappear. Some appeal to Denominational sentiment might have called forth a response which would have insured its survival, and perpetuated its usefulness. From the restoration of Monarchy until now Congregationalists have been effacing the monuments of their history. The two or three thousand ejected clergymen founded many Churches whose very buildings have disappeared and are forgotten. When the removal of these was inevitable their history ought to have been preserved in some neighbouring Church, or

recorded in Denominational Archives. Not a single one that they founded should have been allowed to perish; and yet most of their precious records have been lost, and the places that once knew them now know them no more.

But many have survived, and are still flourishing. The histories of these have been handed down from generation to generation, and their work is continued in connection with buildings worthy of their history. But while many which were formed in Parish Churches, Cathedrals, and Abbeys continue, this grandly historic Independent Church has been allowed to die out. If it were now prominent in the Religious World, what an inspiring object-lesson, what a source of instruction, would stand forth before the nation, having such noble traditions stretching backward into Westminster Abbey itself!

An Appeal.

In the year 1825, when the Church from the Abbey disappeared, there was no Congregational Union. This was not founded until

1832, while "The Union," which confines its work to London, was not established until 1873. Its ministers and members having played their part so nobly, their memories should be held sacred by all Christians. Will not some wealthy Congregationalist provide the Funds for erecting grand buildings in which its history could be revived and perpetuated? We have a "City Temple" in the centre, why not our "Abbey Church" in the suburbs? Such a Church would redeem the neglects of the past, and be an honour to Congregationalists in the future.

Could not one of the noble structures occasionally reared in the Metropolis be made to enshrine the memories of this Church, with a Tablet in the vestibule, telling the story of its origin? Portraits of some once eminent in its service may be placed in the windows. Vestries, Schools, and Class-rooms might bear distinguished names found in its records. The works of its illustrious Ministers could also be collected into a Reference Library. In the case of this Church Denominational Sentiment and Historical Imagination ought not to be allowed to vanish. Such buildings might

become the centre of much Spiritual activity and practical benevolence. From the heroic past, and Heroes themselves, there comes a call that the World shall continue to know of the Independent Church which formerly worshipped in Westminster Abbey.

FINIS.

Copy of the Inscription once on the Rowe Family Tomb, in Bunhill Fields, but now effaced:—

Here lyeth the body of
JOHN ROWE,
Sometime preacher in the Abbey of Westminster,
who died October XII,
in the 52nd year of his age,
Anno 1677.

Near this tomb,
Lies the body of the late learned and pious
MR. THEOPHILUS GALE.

Under this stone is the body of
MR. THOMAS ROWE,
The eldest son of Mr. John Rowe,
Late Minister of the Gospel in London.
He departed this life the XVIII day of August,
In the year of our Lord 1705,
In the 49th year of his age.

Here also lies the body of
MR. BENONI ROWE,
Minister of the Gospel in London;
Who departed this life the 30th day of March
In the year of our Lord 1706,
In the 49th year of his age.

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